

A  
DEVELOPEMENT  
OF  
REMARKABLE EVENTS,  
CALCULATED  
TO RESTORE THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION  
TO ITS  
ORIGINAL PURITY,  
AND TO REPEL  
THE OBJECTIONS OF UNBELIEVERS.

.....  
BY JOHN JONES. *u*  
.....

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There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. *Matt. x. 26.*

Ἡ δὲ δεισιδαιμονία τῇ ἀθεότητι καὶ γενεσθαι παρεσχεν ἀρχὴν, καὶ γενομένη διδῶσιν ἀπολογίαν, ἐκ ἀληθείης μὲν, ἐκ δὲ καλῆς, προφασεως δὲ τινος ἐκ ἀμοιρον ἔσαν. *Plutarch. De Superstitione.*

Dissolvat hoc argumentum, si quis potest: ita enim res rem sequitur; ut hæc ultima necesse sit confiteri. Sed ne illud quidem dissolvat aliquis. *Lactantius.*

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VOL. I.

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## PREFACE.

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THE volume here offered to the public, together with the others which are designed to succeed it, proposes to develop a series of very important events respecting the *Christian Religion*. If, from the perusal of it, the candid reader shall find reason to believe that those events have a foundation in truth, he must feel himself so much interested as to encourage the prosecution of the subject. Much encouragement, however, the author does not expect; since the persons, prompted either by curiosity, or by zeal for "the truth as it is in Jesus," to peruse it, must, from the established course of things, be relatively few. Small, in comparison, is the number of readers who bestow any time whatever upon theological subjects; and smaller still is the proportion of those to whom a work of this tendency will be acceptable. The author, therefore, can feel no disappointment on seeing his labours in this field neglected, and even discountenanced, by the majority of mankind: on the contrary, he is convinced, that the ignorance of some, the bigotry of others, the

fashionable levity and scepticism of the times, the interest felt by many persons of influence, to preserve a corrupt and established system of religion, together with the secular and political pursuits in which the public are generally engaged, will inevitably confine his performance to a very narrow circle. Were he conscious, indeed, of displaying, in the developement of these facts, talents and learning corresponding with the importance of them, he might safely hope for some patronage amongst the friends of genuine Christianity. But to superior genius, and deep penetration, the author lays no claim. He hopes, nevertheless, to engage the attention of those with whom he has the happiness of a personal acquaintance. And should his volumes be circulated only amongst his friends, still he will have the consolation to reflect that even this partial circulation, though it preclude the prospect of emolument and fame, will be followed by some material advantages. His readers, being a select number, will not be alarmed at the boldness of his investigation: they will not turn either with cold indifference, or with supercilious contempt, from his pretensions to developé momentous facts; and what is far more important, they will not bring to the inquiry minds unfavourable to the reception of truth, but disposed by their zeal for pure reli-

gion, and their knowledge of the author, to examine it with attention, and to yield a cordial assent, wherever the evidence may appear clear and satisfactory.

It is not unusual with writers, in the prefaces to their respective works, to apologise for defects, and to deprecate the severity of criticism. But, in the present case, as far as the arrangement of the subject, and the language in which the author expresses himself, are concerned, any laboured apology, it is hoped, will be thought unnecessary. Not that he has the vanity to imagine that his style is faultless: he flatters himself, however, that it is marked in general with the clearness and precision which are the only qualities of good composition admissible by the grave and tasteless subjects of theological criticism.

With regard to other more material faults, the author trusts, that he may justly urge in extenuation of them the words of the learned Spencer: "As to my manner of treating the subject, my industry will, I think, secure me from the censure of any man. The names of those learned persons from whom I happen to differ, as well as the errors and reproofs of others, I have, for the most part, passed over in si-



lence, and that not with any sullen acrimony. Besides which, I have refrained altogether from that illiberal fury with which learned men often lacerate each other. I am not conscious of having, on any occasion, forced Scripture to yield an unwilling support to my opinion; nor upon obscure topics have I indulged an unbridled liberty of conjecture; but used a freedom, tempered with mature deliberation.”—  
“ Since then I have endeavoured to conduct the argument in that equitable manner, which may obtain the general approbation, I cherish a hope of finding my reader not less equitable to myself, and ever mindful of human frailty, if at any time he discover me stumbling in the prosecution of my subject. This hope I the more willingly entertain, in as much as the path which I now tread is slippery, intricate, and marked by very few vestiges; so that occasionally to err in such a road is not only human but unavoidable \*.”

\* Preface to *Libri Tres De Legibus Hebræorum*.



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## ERRATA.

PAGE.	FOR	READ
188. line 3 from bottom,	practisers	preachers
288. line 1,	he	Philip
367. — 10, dele six		
467. — 3,	impartiality	fidelity
490. note, last line,	οὐτα	οὐτα
492. note, line 2, read	δηλοῦμεν	

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NO portion of ancient records, since the revival of learning, has so much engaged the attention, and so widely divided the opinion of learned men, as the celebrated passage found in the Jewish Antiquities, concerning Jesus Christ. During a whole century, its genuineness has been the subject of dispute amongst critics of every denomination, and almost in every country throughout Christendom. The result of this controversy is, that the paragraph seems now to be generally given up as the forgery of some ancient Christian in the third century: nor is there, perhaps, a learned man at present in Europe, whose judgment is held in any estimation, that thinks it the genuine production of the great Josephus.



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For the instruction of such of my readers as have not had the means of perusing the writings of critics on the subject, I will here transcribe the sentiments of the most distinguished among them that opposed the authenticity of the passage.

Lucas Osiander, who, if I recollect rightly, was the first to call its genuineness in question, speaks of it in the following manner: “ Testimonium Josephi de Christo ego omnino supposititium esse credo, et ab aliquo sciolo ipsius libris insertum. Si enim Josephus ita de Christo sensisset, ut testimonium præ se fert, (*Josephus*) *fuiisset Christianus*: cum tamen in omnibus ejus scriptis nihil prorsus, quod saltem Christianismum redoleat, reperiri queat.” *Ap. Havercamp. vol. ii. p. 276.*

The author of *The Divine Legation of Moses* makes a similar assertion: “ The case, indeed,” says he, “ was different in a Jew, who had none of this intercommunity. If such a one owned the truth of Christianity, he must needs embrace it. We conclude, therefore, that the passage where Josephus (who

was as much a Jew as the religion of Moses could make him), is made to acknowledge that Jesus is the Chirst, *is a rank forgery, and a very stupid one too.*" *Div. Leg. B. ii. § vi. p. 295, vol. i.*

Tanaquil Faber speaks of this paragraph in terms still more contemptuous. "Veni-amus," says he, "ad rem, idque demus operam ut probemus sublitum os in hac re bonæ potestatis fuisse; ostendamusque ἡσιν hanc tam insulsam et negligenter intrusam fuisse, ut Origenis testimoniis, quæ a nobis infra proferentur, facile carere possimus; ita res ipsa fallaciam, piam illam quidem, (quis negat?) sed fallaciam tamen nobis apportatam esse vociferatur \*."

So confident was this great critic that the paragraph never came from the hand of Josephus, that he thought it impossible for any person after him to maintain the contrary, and that his book on the subject would put an end for ever to the discussion. "Iis itaque gratum ut faciam, et eorum causâ

\* Ap. Havercamp. ut sup.



multis, uti spero, aliis, decrevi diatribam hanc paucis conscribere; et rem ipsam ita enucleare ut nullus in posterum disputandi locus relinquatur; nisi forte iis quibus perpetuo dubitare decretum sit."

Indeed, this writer went so far as to ascribe the passage to Eusebius as its author, and to point out the place in which Josephus would have inserted it in his *Antiquities*, had it been his composition; and, to complete his infatuation, he drew up in Greek a short paragraph of his own, which he asserts might with equal propriety be ascribed to the Jewish historian.

The arguments urged by this able man have been also insisted upon by Fabricius, Ittigius, Blondel, Vitringa, and by Dr. Lardner in our own country, whose candour and learning seem in the estimation of the public to have finally decided the question. His objections will be stated in the sequel.

Doctor Priestley thus delivers his opinion on the subject: "The famous passage in Josephus concerning Christ is not a



more evident interpolation than many in these Epistles of *Ignatius*." *History of Early Opinions*, vol. i. p. 109.

The late doctor Kippis thus writes respecting the matter : " Without taking upon me to decide concerning the authenticity of this famous passage, I must be permitted to remark, that it can never be of any real advantage in a controversy with the enemies of our holy religion. Of what avail can it be to produce a testimony so doubtful in itself, and which some of the ablest advocates for the truth of the Gospel reject as an interpolation? An infidel must revolt at such an argument. It ought, therefore, to be for ever discarded from any place among the evidences of Christianity; though it may continue to exercise the critical skill of scholars and divines." *Life of Lardner*, p. 75.

The judgment of the celebrated Gibbon deserves in particular to be noticed. " The passage concerning Jesus Christ," writes he, " which was inserted into the text of Josephus between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius, may furnish an example of no vul-

gar forgery. The accomplishment of the prophecies, the virtues, the miracles of Jesus, are distinctly related. Josephus acknowledges that he was the Messiah, and hesitates whether he should call him a man. If any doubt can still remain concerning this celebrated passage, the reader may examine the pointed objections of Le Fevre, and the masterly reply of an anonymous critic, whom I believe to have been the learned Abbé de Longuerue." Vol. ii. cap. xvii. p. 408.

Permit me to produce one authority more. It is that of the benevolent *De Saint-Pierre*. "It is impossible," says he, "to adduce a more satisfactory demonstration of this ancient dishonesty of the two parties than an interpolation to be found in the writings of *Flavius Josephus*, who was contemporary with *Pliny*. He is made to say in so many words that the Messiah was just born; and he continues his narration without referring so much as once to this wonderful event, to the end of a voluminous history. How can it be believed that *Josephus*, who frequently indulges himself in a tedious detail of minute circumstances relating to events of little im-

portance, should not have reverted a thousand and a thousand times to a birth so deeply interesting to his nation ; considering that its very destiny was involved in that event, and that even the destruction of Jerusalem was only one of the consequences of the death of JESUS CHRIST? He, on the contrary, perverts the meaning of the prophecies which announce him, applying them to *Vespasian* and to *Titus* ; for he, as well as the other Jews, expected a Messiah triumphant. Besides, had Josephus believed in Christ, would he not have embraced his religion ?”

The objections which could thus extort the unanimity of learned men of every denomination in rejecting a passage which they had the most powerful inducement to adopt, must appear very decisive. They are the three following apparently insurmountable ones :

1. *The sentiments which it contains are the sentiments of a CHRISTIAN, which Josephus was not : it could not therefore have been his production.*

2. *It is not quoted nor referred to by any Christian writers before the time of Eusebius, who flourished about the beginning of the fourth century, and afterwards.*

3. *The passage interrupts the course of the history, and therefore bears incontestable marks of forgery.*

Such are the arguments which have been urged against the genuineness of this famous paragraph. They seem to carry with them an irresistible weight, and to be such as force the reader, however unwilling, on the conclusion that it is a palpable forgery. Answers, however, have been attempted to be given to them; a summary of which is thus stated by the *Abbé du Voisin*.

1. "It is extant in all the copies of Josephus published and unpublished. Baronius relates, that a manuscript of this historian's *Antiquities* was found in the library of the Vatican, translated into Hebrew; in which this passage was marked with an obelus; a thing which could have been done by none but a Jew. In an Arabic version preserved



by the Minorites of Mount Libanus, the narrative exists entire. 2. This testimony of Josephus has been applauded by Eusebius, Isidorus of Pelusium, Sozomen, Cassiodorus, Nicephorus, and many more, who all indisputably had seen various manuscripts of considerable antiquity. 3. The stile of the passage so exactly resembles that of Josephus, that, to adopt the expression of Huetius, one egg is not more like to another. Proofs of this assertion may be seen in the dissertation of Daubuz, subjoined to Havercamp's edition. 4. Josephus not only mentions with respect John Baptist but also James—'Ananus assembled the Jewish Sanhedrim, and brought before it James the brother of Jesus who is called Christ, with some others, whom he delivered over to be stoned, as infractors of the law.' 5. It is highly improbable that Josephus, who hath discussed with such minuteness the history of this period, mentioned Judas of Galilee, Theudas, and other obscure pretenders to the character of the Messiah, as well as John Baptist and James the brother of Christ, should have preserved the profoundest silence concerning Christ himself, whose name was so cele-



brated at that time both amongst the Jews and the Romans. 6. Let no one person persuade himself that this passage was forged either by Eusebius, who first cited it, or any other earlier writer : for the Christian cause is so far from needing any fraud to support it, that nothing could be more destructive to its interest ; more especially a fraud so palpable and obtrusive." *Appendix to the Life of Lard. N° X.*

These reasons, weighty as they may be in themselves, yet are deemed insufficient to repel the above formidable objections. The passage then must be given up, or some new considerations are necessary to be alleged in behalf of its genuineness. Such considerations it is my object in these volumes to produce. They are contained in the following propositions, which it will be my business in the sequel to demonstrate :

I. *Josephus was in reality a believer in Jesus, though, on account of his political situation, and the great odium which Jewish and Gentile bigotry attached to the Christian name, he did not explicitly avow his faith, or rank*

*himself among the disciples of Christ; but nevertheless he has in several parts of his works endeavoured by a judicious allegation of facts to prove the divine mission of our Lord, and the truth of his Gospel.*

II. *Not only the disputed passage, BUT ALSO THE WHOLE CONTEXT, is such an apology for Christ, his true disciples, and his religion, as could never have come from any of the fathers, or any other orthodox Christian; since he therein unfolds the real source of the miraculous birth and deification of Jesus, and holds up the base authors of those doctrines to merited disgrace.*

Before I proceed to the discussion of these important propositions, it is necessary here to translate the controverted paragraph. It is to this effect:

“About this time existed Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he might be called a man: for he was the author of wonderful works, and the teacher of such men as embraced truths with delight. He united to himself many Jews, and many from among the Gentiles. This was the Christ, and those who

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from the first had been attached to him, continued their attachment, though he was condemned by our great men, and crucified by Pilate. For he appeared to them again alive the third day. These and innumerable marvellous things concerning him are foretold by the divine prophets; and the tribe that from him call themselves *Christians* are not fallen off even at this time \*."

That this passage could never have come from any but a person that was a decided believer in Jesus, is what I readily grant. The following considerations, however, will serve to evince, that the author, whoever he might be, did not openly avow his faith, or rank himself in the number of the professed followers of Christ.

1. Though the writer expressly declares in the above paragraph that our Lord was the Christ, yet it is to be observed that in the beginning he gives him the simple denomination of JESUS. Now if we attend to the manner in which the fathers introduce in their writings any account of him, we shall find that

\* Antiq. Jud. lib. xviii. cap. iii. § 3.

they stile him not merely *Jesus*, but *Jesus Christ*, or *Jesus Christ our Lord*, or *our Lord Jesus Christ*. These titles they annex, partly to distinguish him from any other of the same name, but chiefly to express their reverence for his character, and to raise him, under these honourable appellations, above the unjust odium which prejudice had connected with the place of his birth, and the ignominy which he underwent. If then any of these men had composed the paragraph, they would, it is probable, from the mere impulse of *habit*, have added to *Jesus* some other name expressive of their respect for his character. And as this is not the case, a presumption arises that it proceeded from one that had no such *habit*, or at least was in circumstances which did not permit him to indulge it.

2. The author of the controverted passage, though he asserts the reality of our Lord's miracles, has not referred them to God as their primary author, or alleged them as a proof of his divine mission. The enemies of the Gospel in very early times, being unable to deny, allowed the truth of

these miracles, yet resisted the just conclusion that Jesus was the Son of God ; because other persons, they pretended, performed similar works, who nevertheless had no claim to that high title. The author of this passage however has not, as is always done by other Christian writers, urged this consequence, but contented himself with merely asserting our Lord's divine works. He does indeed *insinuate*, that Jesus was the Son of God, or, at least, that he sustained some character beyond that of *human*. But this insinuation is delivered in very ambiguous and cautious terms ; though Sozomen and some other orthodox divines have endeavoured to pervert them into a testimony to the divinity of Jesus.

3. The clause, *this was the Christ*, furnished the adversaries of the passage with the fullest assurance that it never could have dropped from the pen of an unbeliever. For would a person that rejected the Messiahship of Jesus have acknowledged in direct terms that he was the Messiah ? To this question Abbé du Voisin thus replies : “ The phrase, ‘ this man was Christ,’ or rather ‘ Christ

was this man,' by no means intimates that Jesus was the Messiah, but only that he was the person called Christ both by the Christians and Romans, among whom Josephus wrote ; just as if we should say in our language, this is the same man as was named Christ." This answer appears to me, I confess, very unsatisfactory : for our Lord in this place is said *to be* the Christ, and not a person that went by that name. Josephus, therefore, if he wrote it, must have believed him to be that person. Nevertheless it ought to be observed, that the writer, in making this declaration, had it in view to rectify the corruption (effected, as will presently appear, by the very impostors whom he himself stigmatises) of CHRISTUS into CHRESTUS. As if he had said, 'Ουτος ου Χρηστος αλλα Χριστος ην ; and it is probable that, under the pretence of correcting this error, Josephus has sheltered the testimony which he makes in favour of Jesus as the Messiah. Let me here add, that the corruption, to which I conceive there is in this place an allusion, is a circumstance which speaks in behalf of the genuineness of the passage.



4. Every reader who has perused with attention the writings of the apostles and of the fathers, must have made the three following observations: 1. In speaking of the death of Christ, they generally use an epithet to characterise his innocence; but in the disputed passage we find no epithet used for this purpose. The author does not describe him as *a just* or a *holy* man, but simply as a sufferer. The reader is told that he was condemned, that he underwent an ignominious death; without any additional information, that his punishment was unmerited, or that his accusers acted with cruelty and injustice. But it is evident, from the tenor of the passage, that the writer *felt* the iniquity of his sufferings, and wished his reader to entertain the same feelings. And why then should he not have expressed the sentiment which he thus entertained? No reason for so strange a conduct could, I imagine, have existed, excepting some political consideration which rendered it *prudent* in him not to profess what in his heart he believed to be true. 2. The Christian writers uniformly represent the crucifixion of our Lord as an act not of *Pilate*, but of *the Jewish rulers*, or of the *people*.

But here Christ is, on the contrary, said to have been crucified by *Pilate*. We are not informed, that the governor, when he sat in judgment upon him, thrice pronounced him undeserving of death; and that he delivered him up for execution, merely to secure the favour of the Jews, and to gratify the envy of his accusers. Passing over these important circumstances, which a *professed* believer in Christianity would not have done, Josephus simply asserts, that Pilate executed upon him the sentence of the law, and leaves the reader to draw the unjust inference, that he was prompted to it by the sense of public justice. This is just the representation which is given of the death of Christ by his bitterest enemies. Celsus affirms, that *Pilate* (as being the person to whom alone the sword of justice was entrusted) tried, condemned, and executed him.—3. The sacred authors, in describing the death of our Saviour, on all occasions, use terms, which imply *injustice, treachery, or violence*. The most common word by which they denote his mock trial, is ἐπιβουλή, which signifies an *illegal seizure*, or an *insidious assault*: and the

usual verbs employed by them, in expressing his sufferings, are φονευω, \* αἵρω, προδίδωμι, αποκτείνω, απολλύμι, all which convey the idea of *murder*, or of an *unjust* and *violent* death. But Josephus, so far from employing these or terms of similar import, uses words of a quite opposite signification. Instead of επιβουλή he has chosen ενδειξίς; which, says Potter, in his *Antiquities of Greece*, “was against such as committed any action or affected any place of which they were incapable by law:” as also against “those that confessed the crime laid to their charge, without standing the trial †.” This meaning of the term is also confirmed by a scholium which Valesius has produced from a certain manuscript, which is to this effect: Ὅτι ενδειξίς ἐστὶ κατηγόριας ὄνομα κατὰ πλειονων, μαλίστα δὲ κατὰ τῶν οφειλοντων τῷ δημοσίῳ καὶ πολιτευεσθαι μελλοντων ‡.

\* The verb that our author uses is επιτιμαω, which in the New Testament and other writings conveys the idea of *merited* reproof or punishment. Daubuz, in his learned Treatise on the subject, has collected various instances of its application by Josephus, in all which it seems to signify legal conviction. See B. ii. c. xxi.

† Vol. i. p. 125.

‡ See Daubuz, lib. ii. cap. xviii.

Now from this account of the word, we may draw the following inferences : that Jesus claimed some office in the state ; by which, no doubt, the author meant, that he professed to be the king of the Jews ;—that he had no right to this office, but was disqualified for it by the laws of his country ;—that finally he *acquiesced* in the accusation brought against him ; that is, he did not deny when interrogated by the chief priests, but, on the contrary, intimated that he was the Messiah whom they supposed to be a temporal prince. These inferences, which, if the explanation given above of *εὐδοκίᾳ* be just, must be deemed unexceptionable, imply that the author of the disputed passage *was not* a believer in him as the Christ, but, on the contrary, regarded him as *justly* put to death for claiming that character. But the author himself in the preceding clause expressly asserts that *he was* the Christ, and gives such a description of him as indicates his divine mission ; and therefore must have thought his death an unjust act. How then are we to reconcile the writer with himself ? This is the way to reconcile his language.



The emperor Titus, and other great men in Rome and Judæa, cherished the common mistake, that the Messiah, whom the Jews expected, was to be an earthly king; and consequently imagined, that the claim of Jesus was incompatible with the authority of Cæsar. This mistake was so general, and so difficult to be rooted out, that it prevailed even in the time of Justin Martyr; who, in his Apology, addressed to Antoninus, and the Roman senate, says thus: *Και ὑμεῖς, ακουσαντες βασιλειαν προσδοκοντας ἡμας, ακριτως ανθρωπινον λεγειν ἡμας ὑπειληφατε\**. That is, *and you finding, that we are expecting a kingdom, imagine, without distinguishing the cases, that we mean a human kingdom*. Now Josephus, though convinced of the truth of Christianity, yet having never openly professed himself a convert to it, and being in habits of friendship with the chief men in Judæa and Rome, after he had borne his testimony to Jesus, as the messenger of God, and the Christ, adopted, for the purpose of concealing his faith, and repelling the suspicion, that he was not a friend to Cæsar, such terms, as, taken in their *legal* ac-

\* Apol. I. p. 18.

ception, seemed to signify, that he approved of our Lord's crucifixion, and that Jesus had no right to the title of the Messiah. This certainly was a disingenuous act, and an act inconsistent with that open and manly spirit, which the Gospel inculcates, and which its founders so nobly displayed. It is a conduct, however, which the difficult circumstances of Josephus in some degree extenuated, though not completely justified. It is a conduct too, which, though not agreeable to the morality of the Gospel, agrees too well with history and observation. Every age and country present us with innumerable instances of persons who, virtuous in other respects, have nevertheless loved the praise of men more than the praise of God ; who have concealed their religious sentiments, or made the appearance, sanctioned with all the solemnities of an oath, of believing what they did not believe ; and that, not to avoid persecution and ignominy, which was the case with Philo, Josephus, and several others, but merely for the sake of emolument. But I hasten to another observation, which affords a presumption equally strong, that this passage is the genuine offspring of Josephus.

5. *He appeared to them the third day again alive* \*. Now suppose the declaration here made to a person, utterly unacquainted with the history of Jesus Christ; in what sense would he be likely to understand it? If he believed in the existence of spirits, which was the case with the Greeks and Romans, he would take it to signify, that Jesus's *Ghost*, after he had been dead three days, appeared to his disciples; or that, after he was seemingly breathless for that length of time, he nevertheless recovered. One of these, I am persuaded, would be the inference which a man, to whom the resurrection of our Saviour was unknown, would necessarily make. For there is not the least intimation here given, that he *was buried*; and that God, after this, raised his *body* from the grave.

\* This language is no where made use of by the writers of the New Testament. In no place is it said, that *he appeared to them*, but that *God raised him from the dead*, or words equally strong and expressive of the resurrection of his *body*. On this I cannot help quoting the words of Daubuz. “*Levius erit igitur fortasse animadvertisse, si Christianus hoc testimonium inseruit, vix ac ne vix quidem usus esset hac elocutione, ut Christum resurrexisse diceret. Cum enim isti de hac re loquuntur, Christum dicunt αναστηναι, et αναστησασθαι, et similia.*” Lib. ii. c. xxiv.

The author, then, of this paragraph, though he certainly *believed* the resurrection of Jesus, has, for some motive or other, declined to assert it. And what could this motive have been? The doctrine of a future resurrection, though founded on the actual resurrection of Christ, which was attested by a number of eye-witnesses, instead of gaining the assent, provoked the ridicule, of the gentile philosophers. Numbers indeed of those sophists believed in a life to come, on the principle, that the soul was distinct from, and would survive the body; but rejected, with contempt, the opinion, that the body itself was again to be re-organised, and to die no more. This assertion will hereafter be illustrated, and proved by a variety of instances, drawn from the ancient apologists, who in their writings have endeavoured to remove the objections of their adversaries.

Now Josephus, either not having firmness to encounter the scoffs of the heathen priests and philosophers respecting this tenet (which indeed is the fundamental article in the Christian faith), or thinking it prudent



to keep it out of sight, and to assert only facts, which, though less offensive, *implied* it; or, what is most likely, wishing to conceal his decided conviction in favour of the Gospel, has passed over it in this paragraph in profound silence. And it is a fact worthy of notice, that, when our historian speaks of *James*, the brother of our Lord, and describes the opinions and practices of the *Jewish Christians*, as we shall hereafter prove them to have been, he is equally silent on this point, though both occasions required its specification. This is a remarkable coincidence, which, as it is the usual concomitant of truth, and beyond the reach of the most sagacious forgery, points to Josephus as the author of this noted paragraph.

Not only has the author of this passage omitted to specify the resurrection of Jesus, but also his *ascension* into heaven; his second coming, to raise the dead, to pass, on the different characters of men, a final decision, and to confer on his faithful followers glory, honour, and immortality. These animating doctrines are the grand articles in the faith of the Christian, and are entirely founded on the

resurrection of our divine master from the dead. Hence the ancient apologists, whenever, in their writings, they speak of his being raised from the grave, add, that he *ascended* into heaven. I believe, indeed, that scarcely a single instance can be produced, where his ascension is not mentioned in connection with his resurrection, though it had again and again been asserted. But the writer of this paragraph, in the only solitary place where he notices the resurrection of Jesus, passes over, in profound silence, his subsequent elevation, and his second appearance. The omission of such events, which indeed are the essential principles of Christianity, cannot be accounted for, but upon the supposition, that the author either did not believe them to be true, or had not the firmness to declare their truth ; the latter of which hypotheses was evidently the case. Nor can it be objected to this conclusion, that Matthew (whose example probably Josephus had before his eyes), who wrote the life, and asserted the resurrection of Christ, has left unnoticed his ascension. For it is a fact, no less singular than true, that this Evangelist, without mentioning, has proved with logical

exactness, that our Lord ascended into heaven. The proof which he gives, is implied in the following statement. " Either Jesus is now dead, which the report of his having been stolen supposes, or he is alive, and exists among us ; or he is ascended into heaven, which his disciples affirm." The middle supposition, that he was still in existence, all the Jews knew, and allowed to be false. The doubt therefore lay between the first and last suppositions. The Evangelist asserts the falsehood of the former, and then, by an obvious and necessary consequence, leaves his reader to infer the truth of the latter. Not a proposition in Euclid, or a syllogism in Aristotle, can be found, which exceeds this statement, either in conciseness of expression, or solidity of conclusion. Permit me to observe, by the way, that we here perceive a striking instance of that consistence and brevity, which ever characterise truth. Matthew wrote his Gospel among the Jewish people, who affected to believe a story, which, if true, subverted the doctrine, that Jesus ascended to his heavenly father, and would again return. This story he simply pronounces to be false, and then, as I have

said, leaves his reader to draw the proper conclusion. Mark, Luke, and John\*, on the contrary, composed their respective Gospels among people by whom the story of our Lord's being stolen from the grave was not heard of, or not credited. They therefore pass it over in silence, and assert only the last of the above three suppositions, namely, that Jesus ascended into heaven.

\* The Evangelist John does not indeed *directly* assert, that our Lord ascended; but he has, nevertheless, recorded a declaration of his Master, which obviously implies it—*Go to my brethren, and say unto them I ASCEND unto my Father, &c.* John, xx. 17. This remark upon Matthew and John, shews that the following question, put by *Berrisford* to *John Bunce*, has in it no weight, because it is ill founded. “But let me ask you, in respect of the ascension, which followed the resurrection of Jesus, is it not very strange that this is not mentioned by any of the Apostles, who are said to have been eye-witnesses of the fact; but *Luke* and *Mark* only are the relaters of the thing, who were not Apostles, and had all they writ from the information of the Apostles. This is what astonishes me. If it was a truth, surely so important a one ought not to be omitted by those who saw it: since *Matthew* and *John* did write histories of Christ, why should they be silent on this grand article, and take no notice of it in their records? What do you say to this?” The reply that *Bunce* makes is indeed unsatisfactory; and it is very strange that he should have overlooked the above verse of the Evangelist *John*. See *Bunce's Life*, vol. i. p. 486.



7. Lastly, it appears evident from the conclusion of the paragraph, that though the author bore his testimony to Jesus as the Christ, yet he excludes himself from the number of his followers. “ And the tribe \*

\* In the use of *φυλον*, *tribe*, applied to the sect of Christians, Lardner discovers, or fancies he discovers, a proof of forgery. “ *Φυλη*,” says he, “ is the word used by Josephus for *tribe*; and *φυλον*, which we have here, always signifies *nation*. Nor were the Christians a nation or political society in the first three centuries.” By *φυλον*, however, the author does not mean a political society, but only a large body of men, uniting under one head, and distinguished by a common name. To this body the denomination of *φυλον* or *εθνος* might be applied, without including the idea of *civil establishment*. This is evident from the application of both terms in classic authors to the various tribes of animals; and it is more evident still from that very word being applied to the Christians by *Lucian*, who, as we shall see hereafter, calls them *μιαρον τι φυλον ανθρωπων*. This is sufficient to shew the futility of Lardner’s criticism. I cannot, however, help adverting to a similar objection of *Blondel*. According to this author, *φυλον* is appropriated to men connected together by mutual relationship. This assertion is just and true: but at the same time it is the very thing that renders the employment of the term in this place peculiarly proper.

Our Lord in one of his last parables compares himself to a *householder*, in which he represents his followers as the several *members* of his family. This representation, as was natural, was copied by the disciples; and hence they describe their connection with Christ in terms which denote the relation

that from him call *themselves* Christians, have not fallen off even at this day." If the writer *professed* himself to be one of this tribe, it is plain he would have said, "And the tribe, that from him call *ourselves* Christians, have not fallen off even to this day."

These observations I have made, not so much to 'prove the genuineness of the disputed passage (for they are in this respect perfectly unnecessary), as to apprise the reader, that the author, notwithstanding his

subsisting between children and their father. This strong figure they carried still farther, to express the prevalence of his faith, which is accordingly done in words, that, literally taken, express the increase of a *progeny*. Hence the *conversion* of an unbeliever was spoken of as an *addition* to the family of Christ. As the members of this family led in consequence a *new life*, formed *new habits*, and entertained *new views*, they were said, conformably to the same figure, *to be born or begotten again*, or to become *new creatures*. Farther, as the affinity which all the members bore to their divine householder was the same, and as they cherished alike the hope of a future existence, to be bestowed by their heavenly Father, they assumed the common appellation of *brethren*, and of course the *family-name* of *Christian*. The household of Christ, at length, grew numerous, multiplied into several branches, settled in different parts, and formed a large proportion of the Roman empire. It then naturally received the denomination of *tribe* or *nation*.

full belief in the divine mission, and Messiahship of Jesus, did not rank himself among his followers, but secretly endeavoured to promote and establish his Gospel in the world.

My next step is to consider the omission of this celebrated passage by Justin Martyr, and other fathers, before the days of Eusebius.

“ This paragraph,” says Lardner, “ is not quoted, nor referred to, by any Christian writers, before Eusebius, who flourished at the beginning of the fourth century, and afterwards.”

“ If it had been originally in the works of Josephus, it would have been highly proper to produce it in their dispute with Jews and Gentiles; but it is never quoted by Justin Martyr, or Clement of Alexandria; nor by Tertullian, or Origen; men of great learning, and well acquainted with the works of Josephus. It was certainly very proper to urge it against the Jews: it might also be fitly alleged against Gentiles. A testimony so favourable to Jesus in the works of Jose-

phus, who lived so soon after the time of our Saviour, who was so well acquainted with the transactions of his country, who had received so many favours from Vespasian and Titus, could not be overlooked or neglected by any Christian apologist."

These and other similar arguments had been before noticed by Fabricius, and urged by Faber, Blondel, Ittigius, and others.

"To this," says Abbé du Voisin, "it may be answered, that there is no strength in this negative argument against Eusebius, drawn from the silence of the ancient fathers." "The fathers did not cite the testimony of Josephus, either because they had no copies of his writings, or because his testimony was foreign to the scope of their own; or because it could be of little use, especially in the earliest times, when the miracles of Christ were admitted by the Jews at large; or because that for this very testimony the evidence of Josephus was disregarded by the Jews themselves. To this last consideration Justin apparently alluded, when he thus addressed himself to Trypho: "Ye yourselves



know, O Jews ! that Jesus is risen again, and ascended into heaven, according as the prophets foretold \*."

\* That the Jews, concerned in the crucifixion of our Lord, with others that lived at that time, knew this, may be fully proved from the evangelical history. The elders, we are told, "gave large money" to the soldiers for saying that his disciples came by night, and stole him away. Would they have done this, had they not been fully convinced that his disciples *did not steal* him ; or, in other words, that God raised him from the dead ? (See Matt. xxviii. 12.)

The Scribes and Pharisees, and those that put him to death, must have narrowly investigated the matter, in order, if possible, to contradict the report of the Apostles. They had every opportunity, and every inducement, for such an investigation. The heinous charge, that they had stained their hands in the blood of innocence, that they had resisted the counsels, and slain the person whom God sent to save them, was flung in their faces by his intrepid Apostles. But the truth of the charge depended on the assertion that God had raised him from the dead. If, therefore, that assertion were *true*, the accusation must have been well founded ; and *if false*, it must have been a gross calumny. Would these murderers have acquiesced in an imputation so atrocious, without minutely investigating the basis on which it rested, and thereby, if possible, exposing the malignity of the charge ? Would they have been content to be thought guilty of so great a crime, if, by instituting an enquiry, they could have proved their innocence ? Besides, the Sadducees had another motive for examining the fact of our Lord's resurrection, and exposing it, if a falsehood. For this event contradicted, and by an irresistible argument refuted, their favourite doctrine of

These reasonings can, I presume, have but little weight : for it seems scarcely possible that men so learned, and so well acquainted with the works of Josephus, as those men were, should have omitted a testimony so decisive in their favour, and so difficult to be repelled by their adversaries, unless they had some motive very different from those alleged above, and much more cogent. This motive I shall here simply state, and prove the existence of it, in the sequel. It is contained in the following proposition :

*Justin Martyr, and other early fathers, perfectly knew that the doctrines of the supernatural birth and deification of Jesus, which they had learnt in the Egyptian school, and which they pretended to have come from the Apostles, are*

annihilation in death. As the resurrection of Jesus then overthrew this their darling tenet ; inquiry, they well knew, if not founded in truth, would have enabled them to detect it. With an inducement so powerful, they have must made the necessary inquiry. It follows then, that, as all the unbelieving Jews of our Saviour's time did scrupulously investigate the evidence which his followers alleged in proof of his resurrection, they were in their hearts, though they might affect the contrary, fully convinced of that event.

*referred by Josephus to the Egyptian priests at Rome, in the very passage where he is speaking of Jesus Christ. They therefore passed over this disputed passage in silence, lest they should bring the origin of those doctrines to light.*

It is necessary to develop a great variety of facts, before I can enter upon a discussion of this proposition. Permit me then to begin this inquiry by shewing that Josephus was a decided believer in the Gospel, and an *Apologist*; that the first Christian writers regarded him in this light; and, though they did not think proper to cite his famous testimony in favour of Jesus, yet were fully acquainted with it. To this part of the subject I proceed with the more alacrity, as an opportunity will be given me to explain many interesting passages in Josephus and others, which have hitherto escaped the attention of learned men.

In the first place; it is worthy of observation, though the remark may not be necessary to my argument, that *Justin Martyr*, notwithstanding his total silence respecting the disputed passage, speaks of *Josephus* and

*Philo* in terms of the highest praise. On observing (in his *Cohortatio ad Græcos*) that they wrote the life and actions of Moses, he calls them *οἱ σοφωτάτοι των ιστοριογραφων*, *the wisest of historians*. From this it is plain, that *Philo* and *Josephus*, in the accounts which they give of the Jewish lawgiver, display, according to *Justin*, *very great wisdom*. Would a Christian writer have said this of them, unless, in his opinion, they had comprehended the *true wisdom* of the Mosaic laws? But the wisdom of the Mosaic laws was brought to light by *Jesus Christ*, and by him alone. Is it then too much to infer from *Justin*, that, in his opinion, *Philo* and *Josephus* did understand and adopt the wisdom which *Jesus* thus brought to light? On this, however, and such inferences, I need not lay the least stress. I request the assent of the reader only to facts, clear and incontrovertible. *Tertullian* and *Clement of Alexandria* have both mentioned *Josephus*; but no inference of any consequence can be drawn from what they say concerning him. *Origen* then next demands our attention.



In his first book against Celsus \*, Origen writes thus : “ As Celsus personates a Jew, and allows that as a Baptist John baptized Jesus, I would inform him, that soon after the times of John and Jesus, a certain Jew writes, that John, on becoming Baptist, baptised *for the remission of sins*. For, in the eighteenth book of the Jewish Antiquities, Josephus bears testimony of John, that as a Baptist he announced *purification* to them that were baptized.”

On this Lardner observes, “ Here † it may be objected, that Origen supposes Josephus to say, that John promised purification or forgiveness of sins to those who were baptized ; whereas Josephus says of John, “ that he taught the people to make use of baptism, not for the expiation of their sins, but for the purity of the body.” It is here taken for granted, that Origen did not comprehend the exact meaning of Josephus, and that he has misrepresented the account which this historian gives of the Baptist. Of this supposed mistake of Origen, Daubuz thus speaks—

\* Page 35.

† Vol. vii. p. 115.

“ Quandoquidem \* hic (Faber) et alii tantopere Origenis auctoritate commoveri, si quidem ipsis liceat, ut volunt, interpretari ejus verba, videantur ; quid nimihi, quod his, liceat, quando se Eusebii et Hieronymi auctoritate premi sentiunt ; ut nempe Origenis ipsius auctoritatem hac in re nihili faciam, quod hic non satis accurate Flavii verbi legisse reperiatur, *si quidem verba Josephi de Johanne Baptistâ et Jacobo fratre Domini eo tradit ut nequeunt cum verbis Flavii, prout nunc leguntur, convenire* : et eodem quidem loco ubi de Christo Josephum male sentientem asserit. Ideoque cum verba Josephi tam male accepisse constet, cur non etiam Testimonium de Christo male intellexisse censebitur ? Ait enim, ut ipse ex Josephi sententiâ loqui profitetur, *Johannem in peccatorum remissionem tinxisse* ; deinde propter Jacobi necem urbis excidium contigisse.”

This author, with some modern critics, supposes that Josephus does not represent John as baptizing the people for the remis-

\* Lib. i. 32, apud Haver.

sion of sins ; and charges Origen with misapprehending Josephus in saying that he does this. Now I will shew those critics, that it is they, and not Origen, who have misconceived the meaning of Josephus. The passage which he has written concerning John is to this effect.

“ To some of the Jews it appeared, that the army of Herod was destroyed by God, in just vengeance for the murder of John, named Baptist. For Herod slew him, though he was a just man, and encouraged the Jews to come to his baptism, in the practice of virtue, in the exercise of justice to one another, and piety towards God ; assuring them that *thus* baptism is acceptable in his sight, and not by using it, as the means of averting sins, but of cleansing the body, as the mind is purified by righteousness. Herod, seeing his communication with others, and all his hearers much elated with his discourses, feared lest his power of persuasion should induce the people to rebel ; for they seemed eager to act in conformity to his advice. He therefore thought it better to anticipate a revolution by killing him, than repent after a change should

involve him in difficulties. Thus, by the jealousy of Herod, he was sent in chains to Machærus, the above mentioned castle, and there slain: and it was the opinion of the Jews, that, to avenge his death, there came upon the army of Herod the destroyer from God, incensed at his baseness \*."

Before I proceed to explain the meaning of this important passage, it is necessary to call the reader's attention to what Matthew has said of the Baptist. "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judæa: and all the region round about Jordan: and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O! generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come †? Bring

\* Antiq. Jud. lib. xviii. cap. v. 2.

† The terms γεννηματα εχιδνων and φυγειν, in the 7th verse, are contrasted with each other; and the contrast denotes, 1. That the calamities which awaited the Jews came upon them with *great rapidity*, like an enemy advancing in the rear. 2. That before the change, which was then taking place in their sentiments and conduct, they were unable to escape from it; being, as it were, oppressed with a *load* of



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forth therefore fruits, meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father : for I say unto you, that God is able, of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees : therefore every tree, which bringeth not good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I, indeed, baptize you with water unto repentance : but he that cometh after me is mightier than I\*, whose shoes I am not

vices and prejudices, so as to move no faster than *a reptile*.  
3. That repentance and reformation enlarged their power of motion, and invested them, as it were, with wings *to fly*.

The opposition here observable between the above terms is also to be observed in the following lines of Horace :

————— Pictoribus atque poëtis  
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.  
Scimus; et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim :  
Sed non ut placidis coëant immitia ; non ut  
*Serpentes avibus* gementur, *tigribus* agni.

De Ar. Poët. 9—13.

The same allusion is expressed in the following line of Homer :

————— ΟΥ ΑΙ ΕΠΕΙΤΑ  
ΑΡΧΙΟΝ ΕΣΣΕΙΤΑΙ ΦΥΓΕΕΙΝ ΚΥΝΑΣ ΗΔ' ΟΙΩΝΟΤΣ.

Lib. ε. 393.

\* The words in the original are very forcible and impressive. Taken in their literal sense, they represent our Lord as

worthy to bear : he will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

In this paragraph it is asserted or implied,

1. That John declared to the Jews who came to his baptism, that the Messiah, whom they were expecting, *was at hand*.

2. That a great evil awaited them in case they did not repent, and believe in him ; which evil, though at some distance, came upon them, like an armed foe, in the destruction of their country, and in their separation from the stem of Abraham, which was *just then* to take place.

3. That, in order to avoid this calamity, it was necessary not only to repent and come to his baptism, but also *to bring forth fruits meet for repentance* : that is, to effect a thorough

a *great giant*, with a body and a soul far surpassing other men. So vast was his size,\* that the Baptist had not *strength enough* to carry his shoes. Amplitude of stature is the usual figure to express elevation of mind, or majesty of character. See, if you have leisure, Sophocles, *Œ. T.* 1200, and Hom. *γ.* 165—170.



change in their *tempers* and *conduct*, as well as in their *sentiments*.

4. That John speaks of his institution, not only as inferior to that of Jesus, but also as symbolical of it.

5. Finally ; from the representation of Matthew, it is obvious that the Baptist was a *prophet*, or, in other words, that he was inspired of God not only to inform the Jews of their coming Messiah, but also to forewarn them of the dreadful consequences of rejecting him.

Now I propose to prove, that Josephus had before his eyes the paragraph of the Evangelist, which contains these declarations, and has adopted a method highly judicious and successful to enforce them, without, at the same time, *appearing* to do it.

First, then, Josephus inculcates, that John the Baptist announced to the Jews their expected Messiah.

“ Herod, seeing his communication with

others, and all his hearers much elated with what he said to them, feared lest his power of persuasion should induce the people to rebel."

It is evident, then, from this, that John delivered to the people some doctrine, which, at least in the opinion of Herod, tended to seduce them from their allegiance. Before the king could *fear* that the persuasion of the Baptist might occasion rebellion, he must have apprehended that he instigated them to rebel. This inference is too plain to be denied. But what could have induced Herod to entertain such an apprehension? What but this? John came in the wilderness of Judæa, proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Now in what light must Herod necessarily have regarded such a proclamation? He certainly could not have understood it otherwise than as a declaration to the Jews, that the great King, who should rescue them from the Roman yoke, and dethrone the Herodian family, was actually arrived. This mistaken notion, which he cherished in common with all other Jews at the time, must, of necessity, have filled him with anger and consternation. Regarding the Bap-

tist as the proclaimer of treason ; and moreover seeing the people eager to comply with his advice, like what is written of Herod the Great at the birth of Christ, " he was troubled." Jealousy and resentment were awakened in his breast, and prompted him to cruelty, as the best security against the impending storm. He therefore seizes, imprisons, and murders the man, whose popularity he dreaded, and whose integrity he revered : " thus thinking it better to anticipate a revolution by killing him, than repent after a change should involve him in difficulties."

Herod, like many of the Jews, might imagine that John, instead of pointing to the Messiah as coming after him, proclaimed him in his own person. But still the fact that he did proclaim him, is not hence invalidated, but implied in this very error.

The Baptist indeed seems to have foreseen the error, and to have used every means in his power to correct it. It was doubtless with this view, that he assumed an office in every respect different from the functions, and subordinate to the dignity, of a king. All

interference in temporal and ecclesiastical affairs he declined, and sought neither honour, riches, nor power ; and that he might not offend the pride nor excite the jealousy of Herod, and other rulers, he retired into the desert, and there preached the coming of the Christ in terms the most guarded, and the least likely to give offence, or create alarm. That he might finally rectify the misapprehension of those who came to be baptized by him, with the expectation of seeing him feasting on luxurious dainties, and arrayed in the splendor of royalty, he dressed in the coarsest raiment, and subsisted on the most austere diet. But, notwithstanding all these precautions, the doctrine which he preached awakened the fear and suspicion of Herod. For such an effect an adequate cause must be assigned ; and none, it is maintained, but *the good news* announced by him *that the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, can be assigned as the probable and adequate cause.

Thus we see that Josephus, while he seems to have passed over in profound silence the divine mission of John to apprise the Jews of their coming Messiah, has very judiciously



stated a fact, which implies and inculcates it. Nor is this all that he has done. He went a short step farther, and hints, as appears to me, at the intercourse which took place between John and our Lord with his disciples, on being baptized by him. "Herod," says he, "seeing his *communication with others*, and all made delighted with his discourses, feared lest he should induce the people to rebel." That this communication alludes to the testimony which the Baptist gave of our Lord before the people in the wilderness, is rendered extremely probable, from the circumstance that it was evidently the chief cause of Herod's fear and jealousy: it is at least certain, that it refers to some persons whom Herod apprehended to be concerned with him in exciting rebellion. And who were these so likely to have been, as the man whom he pointed out as the Messiah, together with his adherents?

The murder of John, for proclaiming the Messiah to the Jews, implies in it two things, which corroborate the above inference.

First; Jesus himself must have been in dan-

ger of being put to death in the same manner; on the supposition that Herod knew him to be the person who, as Josephus hints, had communication with the Baptist. And we find, in fact, that Herod meditated the design of killing him, as he did his forerunner. For we read, that, after his confinement, our Lord was obliged to seek security in making his escape. "When John was put in prison, Jesus retired into Galilee \*." Secondly; if, in truth, Herod had put John to death for pointing out to the Jews the great king, whom they were expecting, the fame of our Lord, on first reaching his ears, must necessarily, on the principle of association, have recalled the preacher to his remembrance. And this too we perceive to have been the case. For on hearing of the miracles of Jesus, which indicated that he was the Messiah, Herod said, "This is John risen from the dead;" that is, "the spirit which actuated John has entered into and influences this man."

## 2. The Baptist, according to the Evange-

\* Matt. chap. iv. 12.

list Matthew, informed the people, that, in order to avoid the divine anger, it was necessary not only to repent, that is, to change their opinion of his character and office, but also to bring forth fruits suitable to repentance; that is, as has been explained, to effect a correspondent change in their tempers and conduct. With this representation, the account which Josephus gives of him perfectly accords. "Herod slew him, though he was a just man, and encouraged the people to come to his baptism, in the exercise of virtue, in the practice of justice to one another, and of piety towards God."

3. In order to corroborate the testimony of Matthew, Josephus intimates, that John had forewarned the Jews of some great evil which awaited them, in case they did not repent, and receive our Lord.

"He encouraged the Jews to come to his baptism, in the practice of virtue, in the exercise of justice to men, and of piety towards God; assuring them that thus baptism is acceptable in his sight, and not by using it as the means of averting sins, *ἐπὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν*

παραιτησει, (literally, for the deprecation) of certain sins."

Now, in the language of a Jew, to *avert* or *deprecate* sin is the same thing as to avert or deprecate some natural evil, or temporal affliction, which is the supposed consequence of sin. The Baptist then, according to Josephus, apprized the Jewish people of some calamity that hung over them, on account of their guilt.

The circumstance, however, declares he, of their being merely baptized by John, was not sufficient to secure the divine favour. In order to obtain the acceptance of the Deity, it was necessary for them to unite with baptism, justice to man, and piety towards God; then they would be accepted of him; that is, on shewing the sincerity of their faith by reformation, they would escape the danger which threatened them, because of their transgressions.

4. It was asserted, that in the account of our Evangelist it is implied, that the baptism



of John was not only inferior to the baptism of Jesus, but also *symbolical* of it. That is, in the external purification which the Baptist administered to the *body*, was *typified* and *pourtrayed* that *inward* and *refined* purity, which Jesus by his divine doctrine would communicate to the *mind*. And it appears very remarkable, that Josephus, who had every opportunity to know the real nature of John's baptism (as having lived three years in the wilderness with his successor, who, as we shall hereafter see, was a Christian teacher), understood it in this light, and assigns to it a *symbolical* sense. "John," says he, "warned the people, that baptism is acceptable in the sight of God; by using it to *cleanse* the *body*, as the *mind* is *purified* by righteousness."

5. Lastly; Josephus intimates that John was a *prophet*, or had from God the knowledge of future events. For it follows, from his representation, that he foresaw and foretold to the Jews the future evils which came upon them, on account of their sins. But what could these evils have been, unless they were the destruction of their country, and their dispersion among the Gentiles? And as

the Baptist, according to the Jewish historian, as well as the sacred penman, refers to these events, it is to be inferred from the former, no less than the latter, that he was a prophet. But there is another proof, far more decisive, to be drawn from Josephus, that John was divinely inspired: in his own words it is implied, that he announced the Messiah to the Jews. But this supposes, that he had received from heaven an extraordinary communication. His own declaration, recorded by the Evangelist John, puts this matter beyond doubt. "I know him not; but he who sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me: upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon him, the same is He, which shall baptize with the Holy Ghost." Indeed, the principal reason why John is represented in the New Testament to have been a prophet, was his having foretold that the Christ was coming after him. It follows then, as an indisputable fact, that Josephus *inculcates*, though his political circumstances and systematic prudence did not permit him to *declare* it in words, that John the Baptist was a

prophet, or sent of God to proclaim the Messiah.

In confirmation of this important conclusion, which proves that Josephus was a believer, may be alleged the opinion of some among the ancients; who understood him in this passage as bearing testimony to the divine inspiration and mission of the Baptist. To account for this opinion, modern critics, through inattention to the full force of the paragraph, have concluded that a part of it is lost. The conclusion, however, is as unnecessary, as it is unsupported by either probability or evidence.

Permit me to specify one incident more, in which the author has contrived to confirm the evangelical history. In one clause of it is this assertion: "For they seemed eager to act in conformity with his advice." Compare with this what is written by Luke (chap. iii. 10, 11, 12, 13.) and you will find between them a surprising agreement.

The various, singular, and minute agreements, which have now been pointed out,

between the Evangelist and the Jewish historian, justify, I presume, the conclusion, that the latter had before his eyes the Gospel of the former ; and endeavoured, though with great caution and reserve, to confirm by facts the evangelical relation concerning the Baptist.

There is, however, one supposed disagreement between these two authors \*, which,

\* “ The difference (says Michaelis, vol. i. p. 64) between these accounts *is striking* : for, according to Josephus, Herod alone is to blame, who puts John to death, on a suspicion that is totally ungrounded ; but he is much more excusable, according to the Evangelists, who relate that he was artfully surprised into a consent against his inclination ; they give, therefore, a proof of their moderation and impartiality, in relating the death of a friend, qualities which must excite a favourable opinion in our judgment of an historian. If we compare the Evangelists with Josephus, in point of age, we shall find the presumption still greater in their favour. Josephus was born some years after John was beheaded, and was neither known to his disciples, from whom he could have derived intelligence, nor interested, like the Evangelists, to inquire minutely into the circumstances of the event. He had heard in general terms that John was beheaded by the command of Herod, a few years before the time of his birth ; and, like many profound historians, who think to discover a serious political reason for events, that were occasioned by a trifling accident, ascribed, perhaps, a cause, which had no



as it is very striking, and has occasioned great perplexity to the learned, I shall here notice and reconcile. The disagreement alluded to is briefly this—Josephus relates, that Herod put John to death, lest he should excite rebellion: Matthew, on the other hand, says, that he was beheaded in consequence of a reproof which he gave the king for marrying the wife of his brother.

Now I hesitate not to say, that Josephus is perfectly right in the statement which he has given us. But still it does not by any means follow, that the account which the Evangelist has recorded is false. Nay, Jose-

other ground than his own imagination. This at least is certain, that if we found the same contradiction in the relation of a fact, between either Greek or Roman, or modern historians, we should not hesitate to prefer the author who was contemporary to the event related, and who, to a knowledge of the person described, joins minuteness and impartiality, to him who lived in a later period, and wrote a general history, of which the subject in question was only an inconsiderable part."

Had our learned author understood, as he might have done, this celebrated paragraph of the Jewish historian, he might have saved himself all this trouble of accounting for a disagreement that never existed, excepting in his own and others' imagination.

phus himself, though he knew that he *apparently* contradicted the sacred historian, has taken care to *justify* him, by stating a fact, which implied the truth of his narrative—  
 “ And it was the opinion of the Jews, that, to avenge his death, came the destroyer from God, incensed at his baseness.” The army, of which Josephus here speaks, had marched against *Aretas*, father of the divorced wife, who made war on Herod for the insult offered his family, in the person of his daughter. In the beginning of the first battle, Herod and his army were completely routed; and the victory terminated in favour of the injured father.

Now suppose it to have been a fact, and a fact, too, *notorious* to the Jewish people, that the Baptist had the firmness and virtue to advise Herod not to repudiate his wife; and thus had endeavoured to prevent the war between him and *Aretas*—suppose, I say, this to have been the case, what would have been the language natural for the Jews to use on Herod's defeat? Was it not most natural for them on that occasion to say, “ The destruc-

tion of his army is a judgment upon him from God for violating his law, and killing his prophet, who had the magnanimity to admonish him of his crime?"

The opinion of the Jews, therefore, respecting the defeat of Herod, mentioned by Josephus, *implies* the reproof given him by the Baptist: it points to this reproof as its cause, and proceeded from it, alone, as its consequence.

That Herod ordered his head to be brought to him in the manner stated by the Evangelists, will hereafter be made manifest from the context.

It appears, then, from Josephus himself, that Herod had two reasons for putting John to death—1. Lest he should seduce the people to rebellion.—2. Because he had rebuked his intemperance. And as these reasons are not contradictory, each of them might have had their share in the catastrophe. But the fact, if properly attended to, will perhaps appear to be this—The former was the *real* motive which Herod had for beheading him,

the latter only the *ostensible* one : for if, as Josephus expressly says, the king killed him from fear and jealousy, he must have done all in his power to keep out of sight such base incentives, and to ascribe his death to some cause less flagrant in itself, and more likely to appease the people, to whom the Baptist had been endeared, not only by his exemplary virtue and wisdom, but also by the joyful message which he brought them, that the Messiah was at hand.

Herod, therefore, was well aware, that if he killed him on account of this message, and confessed that he did it from this motive, the resentment of the Jews would have kindled against him, and impelled them at all events to avenge his death.

While Herod was filled with fear and jealousy against the Baptist, he was reproved by him, as related by the Evangelists, for divorcing his own wife, and marrying that of his brother, whom he had seduced. The reproof, however just, offended the pride, and roused the resentment, of the king ; who being raised, in his own opinion, above the



restraints of justice and chastity, punished, as an insult to his person, a rebuke due to his crime. Under this pretence he seized and sent him, in chains, to Machærus, a castle on the frontiers, the distance and strength of which might frustrate the zeal of his friends. But his confinement, though it might gratify the resentment, could not have dissipated the fear, of Herod. His death was the only method of removing all grounds of alarm. But the cause, which excused his imprisonment, would not, in the views of the people, justify his murder. What then was to be done? In the true spirit of the vermin, whose name, by the superior discernment of Jesus, was applied to his character \*, he planned the man-œuvre, which simplicity has thus related :

“ When Herod’s birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod; whereupon he promised, with an oath, to give whatever she should ask; and she, being before instructed of her mother, said, ‘ Give me here John Baptist’s head in a charger;’ and the king was sorry. Never-

\* Luke, xiii. 32.

theless, for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her."

Now the declaration of Josephus, that Herod put John to death from motives of fear and jealousy, supposes that his *sorrow* was not *real*, but *affected*; or, in other words, that he was not, as is generally thought, *betrayed* into this absurd promise, by mistaken paternal fondness, but that the whole story was a *preconcerted* measure between him and his family. And if the circumstances of it be narrowly examined, it will appear more than probable that they proceeded from design. They are too singular and complicated to be the result of chance; and conspire too much with the views of cruelty and tyranny not to have been *intended*. But what is chiefly to be attended to is, that the mother was acquainted with the promise *before* it was made to the daughter. Herod, therefore, must have *previously* informed her that he should make such a promise. Besides, we are told Herod *wished* to kill him, but feared the multitude, because they counted him as a *prophet*; that is, because they esteemed him to be one that

was divinely commissioned to point out the Christ. If then the people protected John from the anger of Herod for announcing the Messiah, we might naturally conclude that this was the chief circumstance which provoked his anger. This conclusion, I grant, the context does not favour, as it ascribes the wrath of the king to the reproof which he had received. But if, as we are informed, Herod *wished* to put him to death, how could he have been *sorry* for being obliged to do it? This consideration of itself shews, that his sorrow was affected, and not real; and that the above reason for beheading this virtuous man was merely ostensible, and a scheme artfully preconcerted between him and the queen.

Now if it be true, that jealousy, and the apprehension of being deprived of his kingdom, were the motives with Herod to destroy the Baptist; and that the above tale respecting the oath was a mere pretext to cloak his base designs, it was natural for a writer of Josephus's political discernment to see through and pass over it, in his narrative, as an idle pretence, and ascribe the death of

the Baptist to its *real* cause. But why, it might be asked, have not the Evangelists done the same? Why did they not, as Josephus so judiciously has done, pass over the story in silence, or express their suspicion of its being a mere contrivance between Herod and his family? The answer to this is very obvious. Either their honest bluntness did not discern the artifice of the king, or, what is more probable, their candour did not permit them to represent as a fiction what they only suspected to be so, and for which they had no other evidence but suspicion \*.

\* The view which has now been given of this story will help us to estimate the true merit of the following passage of the learned and independent, though mistaken, Mr. Evanson. "In the fourteenth chapter" (says he) "we have a very singular story told us of the cause of the death of John the Baptist. But it is the peculiar fate of this historian (viz. Matthew) to have almost all the uncommon facts he has related unconfirmed by any other writer. St. Luke, though he mentions John's being beheaded by Herod, speaks of it in the person of Herod as his own voluntary act, and gives not the least hint that he was artfully drawn in to murder him against his own inclination: and Josephus, who is, equally silent about the dancing daughter of Herodias, expressly assures us, that Herod, after he had imprisoned him, put him to death, because he was jealous of the great influence his character and preaching had upon the people, and because he thought it easier and more prudent by his death to prevent



Let us now return to Origen. "In the eighteenth book," says he, "of the Jewish Antiquities, Josephus bears testimony of John, that, as a Baptist, he announced purification to them that were baptized."

Josephus, the reader will remember, represents John as exhorting the Jews to come to his baptism, in the practice of virtue, and apprizing them that *then* only would their baptism be acceptable unto God, and their sins forgiven; or, as it has been explained, then only would they escape the wrath coming upon them. Now Celsus, it seems, admitted that John did indeed baptize Jesus and others, but that he did this simply as the *teacher of a sect*, or the *head of a party*, and not as a *prophet divinely commissioned* to point out the Messiah, and summon the Jews to his baptism, as the mean of averting the calamity awaiting them.

To prove what Celsus denied, Origen very properly avails himself of the testimony of

any insurrection upon this account, than to inflict the same punishment upon him, after a tumult might be begun." Disson. p. 163.

Josephus; who, though not a Christian in *profession*, inculcates that the Baptist did receive authority from God to foretell the Christ, and to invite the people to his baptism, as the mean, when united with reformation, of obtaining the divine forgiveness, and escaping the wrath to come; or, in the words of Origen, that he came and baptized for the *remission of sins, and announced purification to them that were baptized*. For the expressions, *to be accepted of God, to have sin forgiven, or averted, and to be purified from sin*, bear in all languages, I believe, the same signification, and, in the Jewish, mean a deliverance from affliction, or a temporal evil.

The evil threatening the Jews, to which Josephus represents John as alluding, Origen properly understands to signify the destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple. This is evident from the clause, which he immediately subjoins to the paragraph already quoted — “And Josephus, though he did not believe in Jesus as the Christ, ought, when investigating the cause of the fall of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple, to

have said that these things happened to the people, because of the snare which they laid against him, since they slew the predicted Christ. But he, *as if unwilling*, not erring far from the truth, says, that these happened to the Jews, in vengeance of James, who was the brother of him called Christ; since they slew him, who was a very just man."

On these words, Faber observes \*—"Sane isthæc Origenis verba non sunt perplexabilia, ut ait comicus; quin, contra, nil planius. Clare enim, et ut audiant omnes, ait, Josephum hanc sententiam improbasse, Jesum nostrum esse Christum. Unde ex hoc quoque Origenis loco constat, a Josepho Jesum *laudatum non fuisse*; sed *contra*; itaque adeo id verum esse quod antea sæpe significavi, *adversum* Jesum scripsisse Josephum." After this Lardner says †—"This passage (namely, that concerning Christ) is not only not quoted by Origen, but we can perceive that he had it not." The contrary, however, we may perceive to be the truth. For the clause, asserting that Josephus did not believe

\* Apud Havercamp. p. 272.

† Lard. vol. vii. p. 121.

in Jesus *as the Christ*, only implies that he did not make *a public profession of Jesus* as the Christ ; and this he was warranted in saying, from the disputed passage ; for Josephus there makes use of words, in describing his death, which, if taken in their *strict legal* signification, mean that Christ was justly put to death for pretending to be the Messiah.

The conclusion drawn by Faber, from the words of Origen, that Josephus wrote a paragraph *against* our Lord, is most unwarranted, and proved to be false, by the consideration that Origen understood Josephus, when speaking of John, to say, that he was a prophet, and commissioned to point out the Messiah, and to warn the Jews of the consequences of rejecting him. This consideration too proves unquestionably that Origen knew, that the Jewish historian was in *his heart*, though not *professedly*, a follower of Jesus. But why then did Origen say the contrary ? For the very reason, I answer, which induced him and all the other fathers, before Eusebius, to pass over the disputed passage in silence, and which I have stated in the above proposition.



That Origen had read the disputed paragraph, notwithstanding the assertion of Faber and Lardner, will appear probable from hence.

First ; he supposes that Josephus, though he did not believe in Jesus as the Christ, bore some testimony in his favour, and regarded him as an extraordinary person. This distinction is implied in the words, “ as the Christ.” Thus Celsus used the clause, “ as a Baptist,” to mark the opposition between the character which he allowed, and that which he did not allow, John to sustain. Without intending such a distinction, they are impertinent, and without meaning.

Secondly ; Origen insinuates, that Josephus said nothing *openly* in favour of Jesus, in his History of the *Jewish War* ; a book, which, as he himself attests, in his own Life, he wrote to shew the cause of that war, which ended in the destruction of the Jewish state : —“ Though, *when investigating the causes of the fall of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple*, he ought to have said, that these things happened to the people, because of

the snare which they laid against him ; since they slew the predicted Christ."

Now this insinuation, that Josephus said nothing favourably of Christ, *in his Jewish War*, supposes, that he *did* in the *Jewish Antiquities* speak in his favour. But mark the force of his words—" He *ought* to have said that these things happened," &c.—Why *ought* Josephus to have said this ? On the supposition that he was an *enemy* of Christ ; or that, according to Faber, he wrote *against* him, he could not be expected to do this. On the contrary, if he was a *friend* of our Lord, and if he spoke in commendation of him elsewhere, it was fit, it was his duty, to declare that Jerusalem was destroyed on his account. In vindication of Josephus, however, be it here asserted, what hereafter I hope to demonstrate, that his principal object, throughout the *Jewish War*, was to shew the fulfilment of the predictions, and to establish the divine mission, of Jesus.

In the latter part of the above paragraph, Origen attests, that Josephus ascribed the de-

struction of Jerusalem, and of the temple, to the murder of James, whom he acknowledges to have been a most just man. But no passage of this kind is supposed to be now extant in the Jewish Antiquities. Let us, however, see whether learned men are right in this supposition: if not, it will furnish a striking proof how little the works of Josephus are understood by modern critics. In book xx. cap. ix. § 1. is to be found a well-known passage, which is thus translated by Lardner.—“The emperor \*, having been informed of the death of Festus, sent Albinus to be præfect in Judæa. And the king (meaning Agrippa the younger) took away the high priesthood from Joseph, and bestowed that dignity upon the son of Ananus, who also was named Ananus.—This younger Ananus, who, as we said just now, was made high priest, was haughty in his behaviour, and very enterprising: and, moreover, he was of the sect of the Sadducees, who, as we have also said before, are above all other Jews severe in their judicial sentences. This then being the temper of Ananus, and

\* Vol. vii. p. 129.

he thinking that he had a fit opportunity, because Festus was dead, and Albinus was yet upon the road, calls a council of judges; and brings before them James, the brother of him who is called Christ, and some others, and accused them as transgressors of the laws, and had them stoned to death. But the most moderate men of the city, who also were reckoned most skilful in the laws, were offended at this proceeding. They therefore sent privately to the king, entreating him to send orders to Ananus no more to attempt such things: and some went away to meet Albinus, who was coming from Alexandria, and put him in mind, that Ananus had no right to call a council without his leave. Albinus, approving of what they said, wrote to Ananus in much anger, threatening to punish him for what he had done: and king Agrippa took away from him the high priesthood, after he had enjoyed it three months, and put in Jesus, the son of Damnaeus."

Fabricius and other learned men have suspected, in part, the genuineness of this passage; than which nothing is more absurd and



groundless, as will appear from the following observations, which, with invincible evidence, establish its authenticity.

In the first place ; it states, that the Sadducees were more severe than other Jews in the administration of justice ; and that this severity led Ananus, who was one of them, to pass upon James and others the sentence of condemnation. This is true, and exactly accords with the account which is given of that sect in the Acts of the Apostles. But why was this severity exercised towards James ? Because, says the author, the Sadducees regarded him and his adherents as *transgressors of the laws*. But did not the Pharisees as well as the Sadducees regard the followers of Jesus as the transgressors of the law ? Why then should the latter have been more severe to them than the former ? The true reason of this Josephus has kept out of sight ; and we must look for it in the Acts, where we are led to conclude, that the Sadducees opposed the Apostles with more violence than the Pharisees, because they taught what that sect denied—a life to come, and the resurrection of the dead ; and for the

truth of their doctrine appealed to the resurrection of Jesus. Behold then another instance, in which Josephus, out of compliance with the prejudice of the Greeks and Romans, has endeavoured to throw a veil over the distinguishing doctrine of the Gospel. This, I have observed, he has omitted in the disputed paragraph; and he omits it, we see, in this place, where historical fidelity called upon him to state it, in order to account satisfactorily, and justly, for the cruelty of Ananus, and his sect, in this instance.

In the second place; we ought to remark the very great *caution* with which he censures the unjust sentence of Ananus, and vindicates the innocence of James and his fellow sufferers. He does not *himself* pass this censure on their judge, or apply to him any epithet, which marked his *own* disapprobation, but puts it in the mouth of *others*. “The men in the city, *most distinguished for their probity, and accurate knowledge of the laws,* were *grievously offended* at this measure.” He calls in too the testimonies of Albinus and

Agrippa, to prove the injustice and violence of the act ; the former of whom writes to Ananus with much anger, the latter deprives him of his priesthood, on account of it.

Thirdly ; observe the manner in which he speaks of James as being the *brother* of him who is called Christ. This circumstance shews that the author of the paragraph was not a believer in the *miraculous conception* : for the ancient fathers, who affected to believe it, kept his relations out of sight ; as this circumstance, of course, implied that Jesus, like his other brethren, was the son of *Joseph* and Mary. Indeed, Origen seems to have understood Josephus, as if he hinted at the falsehood of this doctrine ; and therefore parries off the insinuation in the following manner—Τον δ' Ιακωβον τουτον ο Ιησϋ γνησιος μαθητης Παυλος φησιν εωρακεναι ως αδελφον του Κυριου· ου τοσουτον δια το προς αιματος συγγενες η την κοινην αυτων ανατροφην· οσον δια το ηθος και τον λογον—That is, “ *This James, Paul the genuine disciple of Jesus affirms to have seen, being, as it were, the brother of our Lord ;*

\* Contr. Cels. p. 35.

*but thus denominated, not so much on account of their natural affinity, or education, as on account of their similarity in disposition and doctrine."* This surely is false ; James was not stiled the brother of Jesus, because he bore a greater moral resemblance to him than the other Apostles. If any of them, in a peculiar manner, claimed this dignity, it was the favourite disciple. Nor would Origen have made such an impertinent, as well as false, observation, had he not perceived the drift of the writer in calling James the *brother* of Jesus.

Fourthly ; we may remark, that the writer of this passage was not in the *habit* of speaking of our Lord *as the Christ*. For he denominates him *Christ*, as if that was his *proper name*, and not his title, as the Messiah of the Jews. The writer, therefore, was no professed *Christian*, and consequently no forger.

Observe, lastly, that the persons whom Josephus characterises as most distinguished for probity, and their knowledge of the laws,



must, as they disapproved of the death of James, have been believers, either professedly, or so in conviction. I scarcely need add, though it is of importance to do it, that the men, whom Josephus represents as suffering with James, were evidently the disciples of Jesus.

I once more return to Origen. In his commentary upon Matthew, xiii. 55, 56, he speaks thus : “ This James is he whom Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Galatians : saying, ‘ other of the Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord’s brother.’ This James was in so great repute with the people for his virtue, that Josephus, who wrote twenty books of the Jewish Antiquities, desirous to assign the reason of their suffering such things, as that even the temple was destroyed, says, that these things were owing to the anger of God, for what they did to James, the brother of Jesus, called Christ. And it is wonderful that he, who did not believe our Jesus to be the Christ, should bear such a testimony to our James. He also says, that the people thought they suffered these things upon account of James.”

Upon this Lardner remarks \*,

“ Origen, in his books against Celsus, quotes Josephus again as speaking of James to the like purpose. *But there are not now any such passages in Josephus*; though they are quoted as from him by Eusebius also. But he does not say whether from his Jewish War, or from his Antiquities, or in what book of either, as he sometimes does, when he quotes Josephus. Jerome has twice quoted Josephus for these things: first, in his article of St. James, and then in that of Josephus himself; but not much more expressly than Eusebius.”—Similar observations have been made by other critics, who all agree in saying that Origen forgot himself, or that the passage in Josephus, to which he refers, has by some means or other been lost. But the fact is, that the passage is now extant in the Antiquities of Josephus, and wanted only eyes to see it.

In the passage above considered, the historian, it is to be observed, does not say

\* Lard. vi. 478 479.

where James and others were stoned, but only that a sentence of this kind was passed upon them by Ananus. But Hegesippus, a writer in the second century, tells us, that James was stoned in *the temple*. If the account of both these writers be taken as true, we are to infer, that, after a mock trial had taken place upon James *and others*, the mob was let loose against them; who, instead of conducting the innocent victims out of the temple, which they perhaps had orders to do, vented their fury upon them in that spot.

Now carry back your eye to the fifth section of the preceding chapter, and you will find the words of Josephus to which Origen refers. They are to this effect. \* “This

\* Ανεκδικητου δε του φονου μεμενηκοτος, μετα πασης το λοιπον αδειας αναβαινοντες εν ταις εορταις οι λεγσται, και τον σιδηρον ομοιως κεκρυμμενον εχοντες, συναναμιγνυμενοι τοις πληθυσιν, ανηρουν μεν τινας εαυτων εχθρους, ους δε, επι χρημασιν αλλοις υπηρετουντες, ου μονον κατα την αλλην πολιν, αλλα και κατα το ιερον ενιουσ· και γαρ εκει σφαττειν ετολμων, ουδε εν τούτῳ δοκουντες ασεδειν. Δια τουτο οιμαι και τον Θεον, μισησαντα την ασεδειαν αυτων, απωστραφηναι μεν ημων την πολιν· το δε ιερον ουκ ετι καθαρον αυτω οικητηριον κριναντα, Ρωμαιοις επαγαγειν ημιν, και τη πολει καθαρσιν πυρ και δουλειαν επιδελειν συν γυναιξι και τεκνοις, σωφρονησαι ταις συμφοραις βουλευμενον ημας. Antiq. Jud. lib. xx. cap. viii. 5.

murder (namely that of Jonathan) having continued unpunished, the *Sicarii* afterwards, ascending in great multitudes into the feast, with weapons, which, as before, they concealed (under their clothes), on mingling with the crowds, slew some, who indeed were their enemies, but whom they were hired by others to murder; which they did, not only in other parts of the city, but some even in the temple. For even in that sacred place they had the audacity to massacre; nor did they think that they were committing impiety. But I am of opinion, that on this account, God, who hates impiety, has demolished our city; and regarding the temple as no longer a pure habitation for himself, brought upon us the Romans, and exposed it, and the city, to purifying fire, and ourselves, with our wives and children, to slavery; wishing that we should learn virtue from our calamities."

Here we are told that Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed on account of the murder of *certain persons*. And here let me endeavour to prove, very briefly, first, that by these persons Josephus meant the followers



of Jesus ; and, secondly, that the men here meant, he afterwards, in the passage above examined, explains to be *James and others*.

That they were the disciples of Jesus, will appear,

1. Because they were, as Josephus tells us, *enemies of the Sicarii*. Now these *Sicarii*, or *Lestæ*, were bands of robbers, who infested and plundered the country under certain impostors ; each of whom professed himself either the Messiah, or a teacher under Christ ; and therefore nominal professors. But such persons were resisted and detested more by the peaceable and virtuous followers of Jesus, than by the other Jews ; as they opposed an impostor to the true Christ, whom they professed, or brought the Christian profession into disgrace, by making it the cloak of fraud and villany. Here Josephus emphatically and exclusively calls them the *enemies* of these plunderers.

2. The writer informs us, that these banditti were *hired* by others to put to death the persons who were the objects of their vengeance. We

are not indeed told who the persons were that suborned these assassins, but we may well conclude that they were some leading men of the city, such as the Scribes and Pharisees ; who, as we are assured from several places in the New Testament, used to procure murderers to dispatch those, among the Christians, that were most obnoxious to them.

3. So great was the hatred of the Jews against the disciples of Jesus, and so blind and furious was their zeal, that they thought it no crime to put them to death wherever they could be found. And here we have an instance of the same fury and bigotry. " For," says he, " even in that sacred place, they had the audacity to massacre, nor did they think that they were committing impiety."

4. Josephus seems to have had before his eyes the denunciation which John Baptist delivered against the Jews for their conduct to the Messiah, that was sent to save them ; and, in terms equally strong, asserts the same evil consequences which awaited them—  
 " He shall purify you with holy wind and

fire : whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner : but he will burn up the chaff with immense fire.”—After this Josephus says—“ But I am of opinion, that on this account God, who hates impiety, has demolished our city : and regarding the temple as no longer a pure habitation for himself, brought upon us the Romans, and exposed it, and the city, *to purifying fire*, and ourselves, with our wives and children, to slavery ; wishing that we should learn virtue from our calamities.”

5. The paragraph in Josephus, which just follows the above, will, when properly examined and explained, fully shew that he had the Jewish converts in his thoughts on this occasion. But this I shall not now discuss, as it would interfere with my future intention. I proceed then,

Secondly, to shew, that the men, here said by him to have been killed, are the very same with those whom he calls *James and others* in the passage already examined.

Against this it may be urged, that the massacre of which Josephus speaks in this place, happened soon after the time in which Jonathan the high priest was murdered by Felix; whereas James and his adherents were condemned after Ananus was made pontiff. This would have been a solid objection, had not the historian himself anticipated it. In order to shew that the two massacres did not happen together, he insinuates that the second arose from the authors of the first being suffered to *continue* unpunished; which necessarily supposes some length of time between them; and in order to mark this interval the stronger, he inserts the words *το λοιπον, after that*. Nor can we be at a loss to see the reason why the author has brought together two events, which happened on two different occasions. They are events of the same kind, so as to have been associated together in the memory; and they were perpetrated by the same base agents; which rendered the transition from the one to the other very natural, and indeed unavoidable.

Nor can it be farther objected, that the Apostle and his brethren are said to have been



condemned to be stoned; whereas the innocent victims, to whom he here alludes, were murdered by the Sicarii. In this there is no inconsistency. The chief priest and his associates passed the sentence of death upon them. But the sentence was known and allowed by all good men to be unjust; and the high reputation of James, for piety and justice, rendered it difficult, and even dangerous, to be carried into execution. In such circumstances was it not natural for Ananus and his party to apply to the known enemies of the Christians, and hire them to execute it?

Josephus, be it farther observed, when speaking of the condemnation of James and others, has not added a word about the *manner* of their execution, nor of the persons concerned in it; which well agrees with the supposition that he had already noticed their death.

In confirmation of this, I shall farther produce a striking fact. Hegesippus, in his account of the death of James, preserved by Eusebius, says, that the Scribes and Pharisees

thus addressed him.—“ Persuade \* the people not to err respecting Jesus: for all the people and we all have respect for thee, and we and the people bear witness that thou art a just man, and no respecter of persons. Stand, therefore, on the wing of the temple, that, by being above the people, they may all hear thy words : *for on account of the Pass-over all the tribes are come together with the Gentiles.*”

Here it is asserted, that there was a *feast* in Jerusalem, at which all the Jews and some Gentiles were assembled, at the time James was put to death. Of this circumstance Josephus takes no notice, when speaking of the condemnation of James by Ananus; but asserts it in the account which he gives of the massacre in the temple. “ The Sicarii afterwards,” says he, “ ascending, without any manner of concern, to the *feast*—on mingling with the crowds, slew some, who indeed were their enemies, but whom they were hired by others to murder.”—If then the persons here

\* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. book ii. cap. xxiii. p. 79.

alluded to were believers ; if they were murdered during the time of a feast in Jerusalem ; if, farther, James fell about that time, and, as Hegesippus says, on such an occasion, it follows, with some degree of certainty, that James was in the number of those slain by the Sicarii. But whether this conclusion be in itself just or not, it is no less than absolutely sure, that *Origen understood* the matter in that light. For if he entertained the opinion that James was one of those that fell in the temple, as related by Josephus, to whose murder he ascribed the destruction of the Jewish state, we see before us, in effect, the very passage which our learned apologist ascribes to him. The historian, it is true, does not say that this was done on account of James solely, but on account of *all* the persons that suffered in Jerusalem, and in the temple ; that is, on account of the followers of Jesus in general. As, however, James was the only person whom Josephus has specified by name, Origen thought himself justified (though he certainly was not) in saying, that in vengeance of him these calamities befell the Jews. Origen, it is farther to be noticed, says, that Josephus *styles* our

Apostle *a very just man*. But he does not speak thus of him. It is, however, very plain that he *thought* him *a most just man*, and labours, without expressing it, to impress that idea upon his reader. Origen drew the proper inference ; and therefore, without injustice, made him *speak* what he only *meant*.

I have been much longer on these passages than I intended ; and, lest I should offend by prolixity, I shall conclude with three short inferences.

1. The correspondence between the two foregoing passages, quoted and blended together by Origen, supposes, contrary to the opinion of the learned, that they are both genuine.

2. The testimony which Josephus bears to John the Baptist, that he was a prophet ; that he pointed out the Messiah ; that he baptized for the remission of sins ; his paragraph in favour of James and others, and particularly his assertion, that Jerusalem was destroyed for the murder of the Christians ; all these, if allowed to be fair conclusions, prove irresistibly that he was in his heart a



thorough, though a disguised, convert to Christianity.

3. The passages in which Josephus speaks in favour of John and James, though unquestionably genuine, and though understood by the ancient fathers to convey the above important conclusions, have, nevertheless, not been quoted by any, except Origen, before Eusebius. The silence, therefore, of Justin, Clement, Tertullian, and others, is no argument against the genuineness of the disputed passage concerning Christ: for they have been silent in respect to those which are allowed to be genuine, and which they had a very strong, if not equal, motive to cite.

But to proceed. The following is a passage taken from the *Bibliothèque of Sextus Senensis*, inserted amidst the Epistles of Learned Men, in the second volume of Josephus.

“ Si \* Josephus, inter alias Herodis sævitias, hanc occisorum infantium crudelitatem

\* Havercam. Ed. vol. ii. p. 276.

non recensuit, nihil id Christianum virum movere debet; præcipue cum ipse Josephus alia fere innumera, multa etiam majoris momenti multoque illustriora, vel oblivione vel incuriâ vel malitiâ præterierit; sic uti eum *Egesippus* pervetustus historicus accusat *quod divinam Domini nostri Jesu Christi RESURRECTIONEM ET EJUS DIVINA OPERA VOLENS SCIENSQUE TACUERIT.*"

With the silence of Josephus concerning the massacre of the infants by Herod, I have at present nothing to do. Let me, however, remark, that it is hard that an historian should be censured for not recording what had never happened, but is the mere fiction of ancient fraud.

The declaration of Hegesippus, here stated, is important, as it shews that that writer, who, as Baronius says, flourished about the time of Constantine, had read the disputed passage in Josephus, and understood it in the manner I have explained it. "Josephus," says he, "knowingly and wilfully has passed over in silence the *resurrection* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the divinity of his works."

This is very true : though in the controverted paragraph he says that Jesus was the author of wonderful works, yet he does not ascribe the power which he had to God, or attest that his works *were divine* ; nor does he mention a syllable about his being raised from the dead. But I go further than this, and assert, that Hegesippus was well aware that Josephus was in his heart a believer ; otherwise with what propriety could he find fault with him for not relating the resurrection of Jesus ? Was such a testimony to be expected from one that was known not to have been a believer ? Is it to be expected that we should meet with it in *Joseph Ben Gorion*, or in the *Talmuds*, or in any other of the *Jewish* writings ? See also an extract of the same author, made by Baronius, *Annal. Ecclesiast.* tom. i. A. C. xxxiv. or Havercam. Ed. vol. ii. p. 276.

The account which Macarius, in the time of Dioclesian, gives of this passage, is very different from that of Hegesippus. His words are these—*Ιωσηπος* \*, *ὁ ἐξ Ἱεροσολυμων ἱερευς*

\* See Fabricius, apud Havercamp. vol. ii. p. 61.

γενομενος, και ιστοριων μετ' αληθειας τα κατ' Ιου-  
 δαιους, μαρτυρει τον Χριστον τον αληθινον Θεον  
 γεγονοτα, ενανθρωπησαντα τε, και σταυρωθεντα, και  
 τριτη ημερα εγερθεντα· ου τα συγγραμματα εν τη  
 δημοσια αποκειται βιβλιοθηκη.—Which is to this  
 effect—*Josephus, a priest of Jerusalem, who*  
*wrote with fidelity the history of the Jewish*  
*affairs, testifies, that Christ was the true*  
*God; that he became a man; that he was cru-*  
*cified, and rose from the dead the third day—*  
*whose works are deposited in the public li-*  
*brary.*

This is a plain misrepresentation of the  
 passage ; but it is such as was natural from an  
 orthodox person, who was prone to turn  
 words to his own purpose.

So industrious, indeed, have the advocates  
 of the Trinity ever been in its defence, that  
 they have found proof for the divinity, in the  
 sufferings of Christ, and inferred the perfec-  
 tions of God from the infirmities of human  
 nature. The zeal of Macarius, therefore,  
 might be forgiven, who first has wrested the  
 insinuation of Josephus that Jesus was the  
 Son of God, into an acknowledgement of the



Trinitarian faith. But the violence which is here offered to his testimony, is a fair presumption that the assertions of this martyr would have been contained in the passage, had it been the forgery of an orthodox divine.

Chrysostom, it is well known, has not quoted this passage in any part of his voluminous writings ; and hence it has been inferred that he knew nothing of it. But the conclusion is palpably false ; for, in his orations against the Jews, he proposes Josephus to them as a *most faithful witness, or a witness particularly deserving of their regard*—*μαρτυρα μαλιστα αξιοπιστον* \*.

Could Chrysostom have thus characterized Josephus, and held him up to the Jewish people as one eminently entitled to their credit, if he was not aware, that he bore in his writings some remarkable testimony in favour of our Lord ? But no such testimony is to be found in them, excepting the passage in his Antiquities. Chrysostom, therefore, must have read that passage, and had it in his

\* See Ittig. Prolegom. vol. ii. p. 89.

mind, when he gave him the above appellation. As an illustration of this assertion, suppose that *Sozomen* had not quoted in his Ecclesiastical History the testimony of Josephus, but only thus expressed himself respecting him—*αξιοχρεως* \* *αν ειη μαρτυς της περι Θεου αληθειας*—words very like those of Chrysostom, and which Epiphanius Scholasticus has rendered—*Dignissimus erit testis de veritate Christi*: would it not be just to conclude, that *Sozomen* had perused the controverted paragraph? It certainly would. Accordingly, after making the above declaration, he actually cites it, in the manner it is now extant in the Jewish Antiquities.

I shall next quote a passage from Theodoret, who flourished about the year 420. The passage to which I allude is well known, and is as follows—*Ὅτι δ' οἱ παλαι Ἰουδαῖοι τον μακαριον Δανιηλ μεγιστον απεκαλουν προφητην, μαρτυς αξιοχρεως Ἰωσηπος ὁ Ἑβραῖος, τον μεν Χριστιανικον ου δεξαμενος κηρυγμα, την δ' αληθειαν κρυπτειν ουκ ανεχομενος*. Tom. ii. p. 697.—*That the Jews of old regarded the blessed Da-*

\* Lib. i. cap. i.

*niel as the greatest prophet, Josephus the Hebrew is an eminent witness; who, though he did not receive the Christian proclamation, yet did not prevail upon himself to conceal its truth. That is—Though he chose not to make an open profession of the Gospel, he had nevertheless the honesty to bear witness to its divine origin. Here then we have a decisive testimony not only to the authenticity of the disputed paragraph \*, but also that Josephus really believed in his heart the truth of Christianity, notwithstanding his want of firmness and resolution to proclaim his faith in it.*

The author who next demands our attention is Photius, whose learning, more than the age in which he lived, gives an importance to his authority.

“ This † paragraph was wanting in the

\* It ought, however, to be observed, that, as this bishop has made the above observation at the end of his *Commentaries on Daniel*, he refers to a book, which, as we are informed by Jerom, Josephus had written on the same subject. The object of that book seems to have been to establish the truth of Christianity.

† Lardn. vol. vii. p. 123.

copies of Josephus, which were seen by Photius in the ninth century."

" I make a distinct article of this writer, because he read and revised the works of Josephus as a critic. He has in his Bibliothéque no less than three articles concerning Josephus, but takes no notice of this passage ; whence it may be concluded that it was wanting in his copies, or that he did not think it genuine ; but the former is the more likely. He refers to the passage concerning John the Baptist in this manner. ' This Herod, tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, son of Herod the Great, is he who put to death the great John the forerunner ; because, as Josephus says, he was afraid he would stir up the people to rebellion ; for all men paid great regard to John, on account of his transcendent virtue. In his time also our Saviour suffered.' How fair an occasion had Photius here to refer also to the testimony given to Jesus, which we now have, if he had seen it ? Upon this article of Photius the very learned Ittigius, in his Prolegomena to Josephus, has just remarks ; invincibly asserting the absolute silence of this great



critic concerning this paragraph of Josephus."

The argument here used is simply this. " Photius had not in his copies the testimony now extant in the Antiquities of Josephus, because he is silent respecting it, which he would not have been, had he seen it." But this argument, if it prove any thing, proves too much : for it necessarily leads to the conclusion, that he had never perused it in any other whatever ; that is, Photius, whom Zonaras justly calls *εν λογοις ονομαστοτατος*, *the most celebrated scholar* of the age, had not seen a noted paragraph, ascribed to Josephus, though quoted by all ecclesiastical writers from Eusebius, down to the ninth century. For if it did not exist in his own copies, while he had read it in those writers, it is scarcely possible but that he would have made some such an observation as the following : " The passage concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, cited from Josephus by Eusebius and others, is not in those of his works which are in my possession."

To this let me add another remark—Pho-

tius, it is allowed, met in the Antiquities of Josephus with two passages ; one respecting John the Baptist, the other concerning James, the brother of Jesus. Now if he had not there also met with the disputed passage, some such animadversion as this, it is probable, would have dropped from him—" It is very wonderful that Josephus the Hebrew, though he notices the forerunner, and his own brother, makes not the least mention of Jesus." That he has not made an observation like this, is a strong presumption that there was no ground for it ; that is, the paragraph did actually exist in the copies which he possessed.

But this is not all that we have to oppose to the reasonings of Lardner, and other adversaries of the passage.

A book, entitled *Περὶ τῆς τοῦ Παντος Αἰτίας*, was thought, in former times, to have been written by Josephus. This book has perished in the common wreck of ancient learning. A fragment, however, is still preserved, and annexed to his other works. An extract of it will be taken hereafter.

Concerning the author of this book, Photius makes the following remark—Διεξείσι  
 και περι της κοσμογονιας κεφαλιδως· περι μεν του  
 Χριστου, του αληθινου Θεου ημων, ως εγγιστα θεολο-  
 γει, κλησιν τε αυτην αναφθεγγομενος, και την εκ  
 πατρος αφραστον γενεσιν αμεμπτως αναγραφων.

Which may be thus rendered :

“ Of the creation of the world he gives but a summary account : but concerning Christ, who is truly our God, he speaks in terms very conformable to our theology. He gives him that very name, and unexceptionably describes his incomprehensible descent from the father.” After this he subjoins—“ This may, perhaps, lead some to doubt that the book came from the hand of Josephus.” Then he adds—“ I found in the annotations that it is not the composition of Josephus, but of one *Caius*, a presbyter in Rome. Being published without the author’s name, it was hence by some imputed to Josephus ; by others to *Justin Martyr* ; while others assigned it to *Irenæus*.”

My first remark upon this production is,

that, after all that Photius says, it appears to have been *his own opinion*, that the book was actually composed by Josephus. "This," says he, "may *perhaps* lead *some* to doubt, that it is the work of Josephus." Which language appears to me, not to imply that Photius *himself* had any doubts of this kind. He says, indeed, that he found in the annotations that it was not his production. But this amounts to no more than if he had said that an annotator makes such an assertion. Does it hence follow that the assertion was true, or that Photius thought it to be so?

But why should any have doubted, or why should Photius (if he really did so) have entertained any doubt, that the work was the production of Josephus? This might be the cause of their suspicion. The Jewish historian, though a believer in Christ, and though in several parts of his works he has endeavoured to establish the truth of his divine mission, yet has no where *openly* and *directly* avowed his faith, or insisted on the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel; such as the resurrection of Jesus, as the prototype of the fu-



ture resurrection of all mankind, and his second appearance to judge the world. But the book under consideration contains these doctrines clearly maintained, and strenuously defended. This, indeed, is a circumstance which might well induce a person to suspect that it never came from the pen of Josephus. But then it should be remembered, that, if it be his composition, he gave it to the public *without his name*. The reason of which seems to have been, that it contains tenets which he believed to be true, and wished to propagate, but had not the firmness to avow. And this is one of those many little artifices which in the course of our inquiry will appear to have been adopted by this otherwise illustrious author, in order to conceal or to soften his real sentiments.

It seems to have been the opinion of Tanaquil Faber, that the disputed passage concerning Jesus, if proved to be genuine, would imply that this book was in reality the production of Josephus; for he argues against the authenticity of that paragraph, on the supposition that this performance was not his. If this be the case, it will follow, with ab-

solute certainty, that it claims Josephus for its author : for it will appear, before we come to the end of our present inquiry, morally impossible that the paragraph should be spurious. Independently, however, of this consideration, there are two circumstances which here deserve to be noticed, as they render it very probable that it came from no other hand than that of the Jewish historian.

First ; it appears from the words of Photius, that the author, whoever he may have been, was some *Jewish convert*, who did not believe the *divinity* or the *supernatural birth* of Jesus—*Concerning Christ, who is truly God, he theologizes very near us*—that is, very near those *of the orthodox faith*. The writer was not then quite orthodox, but *very near* being so, or in this treatise he spoke in great conformity to their system. This a Jewish believer might well do. For though he rejected the divinity and the pre-existence of Jesus, considered in a *personal* sense, yet, regarding him in the light of a *divine messenger*, and applying to him the title of *Logos*, which properly marked the message which he brought to mankind, he might speak of

him as a *God*, as *the author of all things*, and as *proceeding in an incomprehensible manner from the Father*. This the Apostles have in reality done, though they believed, and, as we shall presently see, insisted, that Jesus was the son of *Joseph* and *Mary*. In his capacity, indeed, as the commissioner of heaven, which denoted him only as a *moral agent*, exclusively of his personal nature, they speak of him in lofty terms, and ascribe to him the very name, which denotes the wisdom and benevolence of God : and it is in the same figurative sense, in the same moral view, as the servant of God, and the benefactor of men, and not in his human capacity, that the writer of this book speaks of our Lord. He was not, therefore, an orthodox writer, and consequently could not have been Caius, Irenæus, or Justin, who unquestionably were of that class.

Secondly ; Josephus, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, hints his intention of writing a book *περὶ Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ*. Now this title is the same in signification with that of the book which we are considering. Here then we see Josephus expressing his design of

writing such a book ; and is there any improbability in supposing that he did execute this design ?

Thirdly ; the above arguments receive some weight from the testimony of *John Damascenus* and *Zonaras* ; the former of whom has mentioned this book as the work of Josephus : the latter, after quoting his testimony from the *Antiquities*, speaks thus—" In his book to the Greeks, written against Plato, and entitled, *Concerning the Cause of all Things*, which book the holy John Damascenus has also mentioned, Josephus writes thus."—*Zonaras* then quotes a passage from it, which I shall cite hereafter.

Upon the whole then we have reason to conclude, that, notwithstanding the insinuation of Photius, this production, which, if we may judge from the fragment of it still surviving, was learned, eloquent, and replete with noble arguments in favour of Christianity, was, in reality, the production of Josephus ; and consequently the conclusion which Faber draws from it against the disputed passage, is futile and groundless.



I have one remark more to make, before I quit Photius, which will afford my reader a more satisfactory evidence, that this critic had perused in his copies the disputed paragraph. This evidence is founded on the law of association, to understand which, I must premise the two following remarks.

1. Photius, if he had read it in the Antiquities, and understood it in the manner above explained, must have observed, that the author, in order to repel the suspicion that he was himself a Christian, made use of a language, which, if taken in its strict legal sense, signified that our Lord was deservedly put to death for pretending to be the Messiah ; or, in the style of a Jew, for assuming the title which belonged to their great temporal prince.

2. In gratitude to Vespasian and Titus, for the distinguished favours which he had received, Josephus assumed from them the surname of *Flavius*. For this, some of his own nation reproached and envied him, as they did our Saviour ; and wished, if they could, to punish him for his arrogance. Here then

Josephus and Jesus did both of them assume a royal name ; and, in this respect, bore such resemblance to each other, that Photius, on adverting to this incident in the conduct of the former, would, by the mere impulse of association, be led to think of the claims of the latter, and to animadvert on the improper language which Josephus had used respecting his claim, though he believed in his heart the justice of it.

Now Photius in his *Bibliothèque* makes this observation on Josephus for arrogating the royal appellation of Flavius—" While many through envy reproached him with it, *he was not brought into judgment for it ;*" which is evidently a kind of *remonstrance* or *retort* upon him, for employing a word, which, taken in its strict acceptation, signifies that Jesus was deservedly brought to judgment, as having claimed an office for which he was not legally qualified. The meaning of Photius, when drawn out to full view, is to this purpose. " Our Lord was condemned for professing to be the Messiah—a character to which he had the fullest right, and for which he was qualified by the

power and wisdom of God himself: yet Josephus the Hebrew, contrary to his own conviction, and solely for the purpose of concealing his faith, insinuates that he was justly punished, and not qualified for that character. How much then must *he* deserve punishment for such equivocation, and for assuming, from vanity and flattery, a title, to which neither birth nor fortune gave him a just claim!"

What confirms the allusion here made to Josephus is the use of *ενδειξις*; the very word which he has employed in the disputed passage concerning Christ. We may observe farther, that the term, as employed by Photius, has no propriety whatever, and scarcely any meaning, but in its reference to the Jewish historian \*.

I cannot quit this part of the subject without noticing a singular passage of Eusebius,

\* An observation of the same kind has been made by Daubuz: "*Vox ενδειξις*," says he, "*hic minus est propria: nisi quis dicere voluerit, Photium de Josepho loquentem, ipsumque hoc testimonium in animo habentem, maluisse vocem minus quidem propriam, ex Josepho tamen, de quo loquebatur, mutuatum usurpare.*" Ap. Havercam. lib. ii. p. 226.

in his Ecclesiastical History. The passage is this : “ \* With this writer (viz. *Philo*) Josephus agrees, both of whom alike make it manifest, that the calamities which befel the Jews originated in their atrocities against our Saviour.” Observe, Eusebius does not say that these writers *declare* this fact in express terms, but that they make it *appear so*; namely, by a recital of facts : that is, according to this writer, Philo and Josephus, while they did not *openly profess* their faith in Jesus Christ, or rank in the number of his disciples, nevertheless endeavoured in their writings to evince the truth of his divine mission, and to hold up to the world the sufferings of the Jews, as a just punishment from God for rejecting their Messiah.

I cannot here help observing, that, had modern critics attended to this assertion of Eusebius, and studied, on the principle it suggests, the productions of those extraordinary men, they would have seen that there is the

\* Συναδει δ' αὐτῶ καὶ ὁ Ἰωσήπος, ὁμοίως ἀπὸ τῶν Πιλατοῦ χρόνων, καὶ τῶν κατὰ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τετολμημένων, τὰς κατὰ παντὸς τοῦ ἐθνους ἐναρξασθαι ΣΗΜΑΙΝΩΝ συμφορας. Lib. ii. cap. vi. p. 54.



most solid ground for believing them to have been in their hearts the disciples of Jesus; and that the grand aim in all their works is to defend his followers from calumny and persecution, and to exhibit his Gospel as a gift worthy of universal reception.

This leads me to cite an observation of *Theophylact*, in his Commentary upon John, chap. xiii. 33. "The Jews, indeed," writes he, "sought him when their city was taken, and when the divine anger assailed them on every side; as Josephus also testifies, who asserts, that on account of the death of Jesus these things happened to them."

Learned men have supposed that the writer here refers to some particular passage of Josephus; but in this, I conceive, they are mistaken: for Theophylact understood, and very properly too, that the main design of that historian in composing his *Jewish War*, was to justify the prediction of our Lord, and to shew that the punishment inflicted upon him by the Jews was the cause of those calamities which, in their turn, they underwent. Hence the words of our commentator are to

be considered as respecting the object and tendency of the whole history, and not any particular passage in Josephus.

Similar to the above declaration of Theophylact is an assertion made by *Minucius Felix* in his *Octavius*; who, in his reply to *Cæcilius*, makes use of these words: “\* Read the Jewish writings, or, if you are more fond of the Roman, ask of *Flavius Josephus* concerning the Jews, and you will presently be informed, that their misfortunes are the fruits of their guilt, and that nothing happened to them but what had been foretold as the consequence of their continued obstinacy.”

From this clause it is obvious, that *Minucius* looked upon *Josephus* as a writer who ascribed the calamities of the Jewish nation to the guilt they incurred in rejecting and putting to death their Messiah. Observe too,

\* Scripta eorum relege; vel, si Romanis magis gaudes ut transeamus, *Flavii Josephi*, vel *Antonii Juliani de Judæis* require; jam scies nequitia suâ hanc eos meruisse fortunam: nec quidquam accidisse quod non sit his, si in contumaciâ perseverarent, ante prædictum. P. 319.

what is very remarkable, that he classes Josephus, not with the *Jewish*, but with the *Roman* writers.

I shall conclude this branch of my subject with an observation which *Suidas* makes on the word *Jesus*. "We find," says he, "Josephus, who wrote the history of the Jewish captivity, openly declaring in his records of that event, that Jesus purified himself with the priests in the temple." Whether or not Josephus ever made a declaration of this kind, is not at present my business to inquire, but only to observe, that *Suidas* seems to have been well acquainted with the systematic concealment of our historian, and contrasts with it, as appears to me, his *explicitness* on the occasion to which he here refers : and on this contrast rests the propriety of the adverb *φανερώς* ; which, if considered in this light, is very significant, but has otherwise little or no propriety.

I proceed next to examine the context of the disputed passage ; which, as it lays open the origin of the corruptions of Christianity, and developes a series of events on which is

impressed in legible characters the truth of the Christian religion, exceeds in value and importance, I had almost said, all the united productions of Greece and Rome.

“ This paragraph \*,” says Dr. Lardner, “ concerning Jesus, interrupts the course of the narrative ; and therefore it is not genuine, but is an interpolation.”

“ In the preceding paragraph Josephus gives an account of an attempt of Pilate to bring water from a distant place to Jerusalem with the sacred money, which occasioned a disturbance, in which many Jews were killed, and many others were wounded.”

“ The paragraph next following this, about which we are now speaking, begins thus : ‘ And about the same time another sad calamity gave the Jews great uneasiness.’ That calamity was no less than banishing the Jews from Rome by order of the emperor Tiberius, occasioned, as he says, by the misconduct of some Jews in that city.”

\* Vol. vii. p. 124.



“ This paragraph, therefore, was not originally in Josephus. It does not come from him : but it is an interpolation inserted by somebody afterwards. This argument must be of great weight with all who are well acquainted with the writings of Josephus, who is a cool and sedate writer, and never failing to make transitions where they are proper or needful.”

“ I believe it is not easy to instance in another writer, who is so exact in all his pauses and transitions, or so punctual in the notice he gives, when he has done with one thing, and goes on to another. That must make this argument the stronger.”

“ Tillemont was very sensible of this difficulty, though he thinks that the writers, who maintain the genuineness of this passage, have made good their point. ‘ It must be owned, however,’ says he, ‘ that there is one thing embarrassing in this passage, which is, that it interrupts the course of the narration in Josephus ; for that which immediately follows begins in these terms : ‘ About the same time there happened another misfortune,

which disturbed the Jews.' For those words 'another misfortune,' have no connection with what was just said of Jesus Christ, which is not mentioned as an unhappiness ; and, on the contrary, it has a very natural reference to what precedes in that place, which was a sedition, in which many Jews were killed or wounded. Certainly it is not so easy to answer to this difficulty as to the others. I wish that Mr. Huet and Mr. Roie had stated this objection, and given satisfaction upon it. As for myself, I know not what to say to it, but that Josephus himself might insert this passage after his work was finished ; and he did not then think of a more proper place than this, where he passed from what happened in Judæa, under Pilate, to somewhat that was done at the same time at Rome ; and he forgot to alter the transition which he had made at first."

" Undoubtedly the difficulty presses very hard, which will allow of no better solution."

Thus do Lardner, and others with him, argue against the authenticity of the passage, from its apparent want of connection ; while

they understood neither the passage itself, nor any part of the context in which it stands. The objection here stated will remain a lasting monument of the fallacy of learning and criticism, when separated from a knowledge of the law which regulates the human mind.

Before I proceed to the solution of this difficulty, or rather before I turn it into a demonstration of the genuineness of the paragraph, I cannot help adverting to the temerity of Lardner's inference—"The paragraph interrupts the course of the narration, therefore it is an interpolation." With as much propriety might the inference be reversed—"It interrupts the course of the narration, therefore it is *genuine*." For would not an interpolator be much more likely to guard against the suspicion of forgery, by giving it a proper connection, than an authentic writer? A person capable of writing a passage in the style of Josephus must surely have had the address to insert it in a place where it might have the appearance of unity with the context. He would not, by a total want of arrangement, put it in the power of every reader to say, "it obviously interrupts the

course of the narrative, and therefore it is an interpolation."

That the reader may have a clear view of the connection which the paragraph sustains, I shall here lay before him the whole context as it stands in the original, and which forms the ground-work of our future inquiry. The passage preceding the controverted one is to this effect. " Pilate caused water to be introduced into Jerusalem, at the expence of the sacred money ; fixing on the source of the stream at the distance of two hundred stadia. But the Jews were not pleased with this proceeding : many thousands of them came together, and with shouts demanded of him to desist from his design. Some of them made use of reproaches, and, as is usual with mobs, insulted the governor. But having dispatched a large number of soldiers, disguised in a Jewish dress, under which they carried short swords, into a place where they might surround the multitude, he then ordered them to separate. While they pressed forward to reproach him, he gave the military the signal, before agreed upon ; who did far greater execution than what Pilate order-



ed : as they punished without distinction the peaceable and the tumultuous. But the people were not in the least appeased, so that many being unarmed, and assailed by armed men, were killed on the spot ; while others escaped with wounds. And thus was the tumult suppressed.

“ And about this time existed Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he might be called a man : for he was the author of wonderful works, and the teacher of such men as embrace truths with delight. He united to himself many Jews, and many from among the Gentiles. This was the Christ : and those that, from the first, had been attached to him, continued their attachment, though he was condemned by our great men, and crucified by Pilate. For he appeared to them again alive the third day : these and innumerable other marvellous things concerning him being foretold by the divine prophets. And the tribe that from him call themselves Christians, are not even at this time fallen off.

“ And about those times another sad cala-

mity agitated the Jews, with which are connected certain flagrant deeds respecting the temple of Isis. This audacious crime of the priests of Isis I shall first relate, and then transfer the narrative to the calamity which the Jews suffered.

“ At Rome lived a woman, named *Paulina*, greatly distinguished for the dignity of her ancestors, and the charms of personal virtue. She was very rich, and very beautiful; and it was the principal study of her life to cultivate modesty, which indeed is the chief ornament of her sex. She was married to *Saturninus*, whose merit in every respect equalled the virtues of his wife. With this woman *Decius Mundus*, a knight of high rank, became enamoured. For the gratification of his passion he offered her large sums of money; but she, being too great to surrender her chastity to a bribe, refused his offer, and her refusal inflamed him the more. He, however, still continued making more handsome proposals, which at length amounted to two hundred thousand Attic drachmæ, for the indulgence of one night. This too she rejected. Mundus, unable to support

the disappointment occasioned him, resolved to starve himself to death. Upon this fatal resolution he was bent ; nor could he be diverted from the execution of it. But in his service lived one Ida, a woman made free by his father, and capable of every villany. Being much grieved at the resolution of her young master (for he appeared to be dying), she re-animates him with her address, and made him hope that she should procure him the enjoyment of Paulina. He is transported with her promise, and advanced her fifty thousand drachmæ, which she said was sufficient for the purpose. Ida, on reviving the young man by these means, and having received the desired sum, pursues a different way for subduing the woman, who, she saw, would not yield the citadel of her virtue to the force of money. Knowing that she was much devoted to the worship of Isis, she planned this scheme : she goes to some of the priests, and discloses the passion of her master, and by her entreaties (but chiefly by her presents, having at the time given them twenty-five thousand drachmæ, with the promise of an equal amount when the scheme should succeed) prevails upon them to use all their

endeavours to procure him the beloved woman. Captivated with such sums of gold, they pledged their service. The oldest of them repaired to the house of Paulina, and obtained a private interview with her. He came, he said, from the god Anubis, who was enamoured with her beauty. The information gave her pleasure. By the assistance of her associates she adorned herself in a style worthy the honour done her by Anubis; and acquainted her husband that she had been invited to his table and his bed. Convinced of her chastity, he permitted her to accept the invitation, and accordingly she went to the holy place. Supper being now over, the time of repose arrived, the doors of the temple fastened, and the lights removed, Mundus, who had there concealed himself, then obtained the enjoyment which he wished. Supposing him to be the god, she administered throughout the night to his lust. Before those of the priests, who had not been made privy to the fraud, were up, Mundus departed; and Paulina returning in the morning to her husband, told him of the god's appearance; and to her friends she boasted of him in splendid language. These, consider-



ing the matter, did not, in part, give her credit, and, in part, were held in amazement, being unable to disbelieve what she said, because of her known worth and modesty. The third day after this Mundus met, and thus accosted, her: 'Thou hast, Paulina, spared me two hundred thousand drachmæ, which thou mightest have added to thine own fortune; while, at the same time, thou hast not failed to gratify my desire. For the reproachful names thou hast given Mundus, I little care; since I have enjoyed thee under the assumed name of Anubis.' Understanding, at length, the atrocious deed into which she had been betrayed, she rent her robes, and revealed the crime to her husband, entreating his interference. Accordingly he laid before the emperor the whole affair. Tiberius having minutely examined the priests, ordered them to be crucified, together with Ida, who was the cause of ruin and disgrace to this woman. The temple of Isis he destroyed, and threw her shrine into the Tiber. Mundus he only banished, thinking that, as he offended through excess of love, he did not merit a severer punishment. Such was the disgrace brought by the priests on the

temple of Isis. I now return to relate the misfortune which at the same time befell the Jews at Rome.

“ A Jew resided there, who, having been accused of transgressing the laws of Moses, fled from his country to avoid the punishment which threatened him. In every respect he was a wicked man. During his residence at Rome he professed to unfold the wisdom of the Mosaic laws, in conjunction with three other men, who, in every view, resembled himself. With these associated Fulvia, a woman of rank, that had become a convert to the Jewish religion, and whom they prevailed upon to send, for the temple of Jerusalem, presents of purple and gold. These they received, and appropriated to their own use ; which, indeed, was their motive at first in making the request. Tiberius, when informed of this by Saturninus, the husband of the unjustly accused Fulvia, commanded all the Jews to be expelled from the city. The men, to the number of four thousand, were taken into the army by order of the senate, and sent to the island of Sardinia ; but

the greatest part of them, determined to preserve their laws unviolated, refused to serve as soldiers. These were put to death. And thus, because of the wickedness of four men, the Jews were driven from the city.

“ Nor did the nation of the Samaritans escape disturbance. For they were stirred up by a man, who, making no scruple of telling falsehoods, and influenced by the desire of popularity, imposed on the multitude by various artifices. Having prevailed upon them to assemble on Mount Gerizim, a place in their estimation the most holy, he there promised to shew them the sacred vessels which Moses had deposited and concealed in that spot. The people, giving credit to him, took up arms, and having stationed themselves in a certain village, called *Tirathabab*, were joined by such as had already been collected in that place. These, by their superior numbers, intended to make an ascent up the mountain. But Pilate, having anticipated their march, by a detachment of infantry and cavalry, attacked them in the village ; in which attack he slew some, and put

others to flight ; but the greater number he made prisoners, the chief of whom Pilate executed \*."

Such is the account given us by Josephus concerning these great and mighty events. Modern critics, not comprehending them, have for this reason insisted, that the testimony concerning Christ bears no connection with the context, and must, therefore, be an interpolation. Let us then examine it in this respect.

In the paragraph preceding it, Josephus, we have seen, records a disturbance which happened between Pilate and the Jewish people, on account of some water to be brought into Jerusalem. Now this was not the only disturbance which took place between them. The Evangelist Matthew relates another, which must have happened about the same time : " When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands

\* Jud. Antiq. book xviii. cap. iii. p. 876—879.



before the multitude, *saying*, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." My question then is, could Josephus avoid having in his mind the tumult of which Matthew here speaks, when he was just relating another of the same kind between Pilate and the people? And as he necessarily had such an event in his mind, was it not natural for him to pass over to it, or to some leading circumstance connected with it? And this the disputed passage shews him to have done. From the commotion respecting the water, he steps, by association, to that which attended the trial of our Lord. On this last he did not suffer his imagination to dwell; but is carried forward to the innocent cause of it, which was our Saviour. If the intermediate idea, which is that of a *tumult*, and which occasioned the transition in the thoughts of the writer, be inserted, the connection, which before appeared far-fetched and abrupt, will then be clear and pertinent—  
 "And thus was the tumult suppressed. And about this time arose between Pilate and the Jews *another tumult* respecting *Jesus*, who was a wise man, if indeed he might be called

a man," &c. Regarded in this light, scarcely can any two passages be found that bear a closer affinity to each other.

An instance of this kind, where the transition is apparently abrupt, but is, in reality, the most natural and obvious, is to be met with in the paragraph respecting John the Baptist. That paragraph will appear, on examination, to have been inserted in a place, where it *seems* to have not the least connection, but evidently interrupts the course of the narrative, and, indeed, is no other than a *parenthesis*, introduced in the midst of a sentence, which by means of it is broken into two distinct fragments. Hence Blondel, who alone had the temerity to argue on this account against its genuineness, says thus: "Scripserat \* *Josephus*: ταυτα Ἡρωδης γραφει προς τον Τιβεριον· ὁ δ' ὀργη φερων την Αρετα επιχειρησιν, γραφει προς Ουιτελλιον, πολεμον εξενεγκειν· και ητοι ζων ελοντα αναγαγειν δεδεμενον, η κτεινομενου πεμπειν την κεφαλην αυτου. Και Τιβεριος μεν ταυτα πρασσειν επεστελλε τω κατα Συριαν στρατηγα. Ουιτελλιος δε παρασκευασαμενος ως εις

\* Ap. Havercamp. vol. ii. p. 260.

πολεμον, &c. &c. At nebulo, ut suo de Johanne commento locum faceret, *narrationis filo abrupto*, post στρατηγω lineas 20, nec prioribus nec posterioribus cohærentes, *intrusit*."

Had this great man understood the law of association, he would not have used that as an argument against the passage, which infallibly demonstrates its authenticity. The historian, just before the passage which he has inserted concerning the Baptist, is speaking of the war that broke out between Herod and Aretas, because of the injury done by the former to the family of the latter, and for which John reproved him, as being guilty of injustice and intemperance. Herod sent the emperor such an account of Aretas, as made him very angry, which induced him to write to his general in Syria, demanding of him to send his head to Rome. Now if Herod had given similar orders to bring him the head of John, for his interference in this business, would it not have been very natural in Josephus, on saying that Tiberius gave orders for the head of Aretas to be sent to him, to think, and, if his pen was permitted to follow the chain of his ideas, to speak of the same order given

respecting the Baptist? And this we find is the fact. The writer, after saying that Tiberius issued the above command, breaks off the thread of his discourse, and introduces the murder of John by Herod. Thus it appears that this passage, while it labours under a seeming want of connection, bears the closest affinity to the context; which proves these two things, that it was not the interpolation of a forger, but must have been suggested to the writer of the context by the mere impulse of association; and that the command given by Herod to take off the head of John, as stated by our Evangelists, was a fact which existed in his mind at the time he composed it. It is to be remarked too, that this command, though it formed the link which led the author to think and to speak of John, is not expressed by him; and hence the very great similarity in the manner in which Josephus has introduced the two passages respecting Jesus and his forerunner. Both are introduced with seemingly great abruptness; but if the law of the human mind be attended to, they have the closest connection. The intermediate ideas, which caused this insertion, are, in each in-



stance, kept out of sight ; and, what is most singular, both of them are supplied by the Evangelist Matthew.

The accounts subjoined to the disputed passage next demand our attention. I shall begin with the last of the three disturbances which Josephus has recorded ; namely, that occasioned by the Samaritan impostor.

Of the object which this Samaritan had in view, our historian has not informed us. But we may fairly conclude, that he professed to be the great temporal prince, whom the Jews and Samaritans, in those times, eagerly expected. For no other object could he have prevailed on the deluded multitude to take up arms, and expose their lives to danger, in his behalf ; nor could any pretension but this have awakened the jealousy, and justified the interference, of Pilate. On the supposition that he and his followers were pursuing some end hostile to the government, it was natural in him to interpose his authority, and bring them to punishment. And what end could this have been, unless it was to support their chief as the Messiah, who was to rescue

them, as they conceived, from the Roman yoke ?

These considerations are fully confirmed by a passage in *Origen*, which assures us, that the impostor, of whom Josephus here speaks, aimed by his artifices to make the people believe that he was their wished-for *Christ*. The passage to which I allude is as follows —“ After \* the times of Jesus, Dositheus, a Samaritan, endeavoured to persuade his countrymen that he was the Christ whom Moses foretold ; and he appears to have procured followers.”

The evidence, it seems, which this juggler pretended to offer that he was the Christ foretold by Moses, consisted in being able to point out to the people, on Mount Gerizim, the sacred utensils, which Moses was supposed to have deposited in that place.

Here then we find in the *Antiquities* of Josephus two paragraphs, just succeeding each other ; one giving an account of an extraordi-

\* Orig. cont. Cels. p. 44.

nary man, professing to be the Messiah in Judæa; the other, of a person, very different indeed in character, but soon after making the same profession in Samaria. This passage, therefore, claims, in point of subject, a close alliance with that concerning our Lord, and implies that they both came from the same author. After bearing his testimony to the true Messiah, who appeared among the Jews, was it not natural in Josephus to stigmatize the false claims of a man that had the wickedness and address to oppose himself to the Son of God? Admitting, what we shall presently see was the case, that our author had no design to bring his evidence against the Samaritan impostor, as the impious *antagonist* of our Lord, yet it is easy to prove that both narratives came from the same hand, and that the passage respecting Jesus was no more a forgery than this concerning Dositheus. When Josephus was giving the character of our Saviour, he had in his mind the idea of a person who, by enforcing his just claim to the Messiahship, occasioned a tumult between Pilate and the Jewish people: and must not this idea have excited in his recollection a man, that among the Samaritan

nation excited between them a similar tumult, and by the same pretension? If so, must he not have passed from the former to the latter by the mere impulse of association? Besides, the affinity between the two passages is plainly pointed out by Josephus himself—"Nor," says he, "have the nation of the Samaritans escaped disturbance." This disturbance, be it remembered, was occasioned by a man professing to be the Messiah. It seems then that the historian had already related some commotion which *the nation of the Jews* had suffered from the same cause.

The narrative of Josephus concerning the tumult which distressed the Jews at Rome, next demands our notice. In order to point out the errors of learned men on this subject, and to pave the way for demonstrating the propositions which I have above laid down, I propose to shew,

I. *That the Jew spoken of in this paragraph was a NOMINAL convert to Christianity; who, in conjunction with certain Egyptians, that had been priests of Isis, introduced the Gospel into Rome.*



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I. *That the Jew spoken of in this paragraph was a NOMINAL convert to Christianity; who, in conjunction with certain Egyptians; that had been priests of Isis, introduced the Gospel into Rome.*

II. *That the ill-treatment which the Jews suffered from Tiberius and the senate, and their banishment from Italy, were chiefly owing to the introduction of Christianity into that city, and to the rapid progress which it made there, in spite of the opposition it received from the government, and from its other enemies.*

In support of these propositions, as they have escaped the attention of modern ecclesiastical writers, I hope to produce proofs the most decisive, and such as must satisfy every impartial inquirer. Nothing, I am sensible, less than the most unequivocal evidence, is sufficient to establish them; and when such evidence can with safety be opposed to authority, I cannot, in the eye of reason, incur the imputation of rashness and vanity, or be thought to be actuated by the spirit of innovation.

But before I proceed to the testimonies which establish the above assertions, it may be right to advert to one or two objections, which are apt to force themselves on the reader.

Christianity, it may be said, could not have

been introduced into Rome at a period so early as the reign of *Tiberius*. But this, so far from being impossible, or even improbable, is the very reverse. Learned men are agreed, that, between the crucifixion of our Saviour, and the death of that emperor, there intervened, at least, the space of *four* years. This surely is a length of time sufficient for the introduction of it into that city, had it been much more remote from Judæa than it really is. That, during a period so long, the Gospel should not, by some means or other, have been conveyed thither, is a thing utterly inconsistent, I will not say, with the zeal of its first propagators, whose early labours were necessarily limited to their own country, but with that *curiosity* and importance, which the fame of its holy founder soon excited in every part of the Roman empire.

In the Acts of the Apostles we are furnished with a fact, which almost amounts to a certainty, that Christianity was *professed* at Rome not long after the resurrection of our Lord. On the day of Pentecost, we are told “strangers *from Rome* heard the Apostles speak with unknown tongues,” and, among others, received



the faith. These strangers, on their return from Jerusalem, must have carried the Gospel with them; and it is very improbable that these professors should have been content to keep their faith in silence, or that the Apostles should have allowed them to depart unattended by some teachers, who might farther instruct and confirm them.

But against my first proposition, that the Jew and his associates were believers in Christ, and preachers of his Gospel, it may farther be seriously urged, that "in every respect they were wicked men." In answer to this, I beg leave to cite a sensible and just remark of Doctor Priestley. "We are not to suppose," says he, "that every person who professed Christianity embraced it in all its purity, or immediately resigned himself to the full and proper influence of it. Many persons who had been addicted to philosophy would consider Christianity as a new and improved species of philosophy; and, as they had been used to do with respect to other systems, they would adopt or reject what they thought proper of it, and in doing this would naturally retain what was most consonant to

the principles to which they had long been attached," &c.

"Christianity would of course find persons in every possible disposition and state of mind, and would therefore be received with every possible variety of effect, and in all cases *time* would be requisite to the full understanding both of its principles, and its requirements, and to separate the proper professor from the improper and unworthy. Of this we may be satisfied by reading the apostolical epistles, where we find accounts of persons, who classed themselves with Christians, and yet both disbelieved some of its fundamental doctrines, and likewise allowed themselves in practices, which it strictly prohibited. This continued a long time after the age of the Apostles, as ecclesiastical history testifies." *Early Opinions*, vol. i. p. 140, 141.

To this may be added another remark, equally just and certain. Notwithstanding the great odium attached to the profession of Christianity in early times, many embraced it merely for sinister purposes. The mira-

cles which our Lord performed, the reality of which was universally believed, both in Judæa and other countries, *disposed* \* the minds of men to receive *false miracles*, and to ascribe those events to the agency of an invisible being, which, in fact, were effected by ordinary, but unknown means. Of this disposition a multitude of persons had the cunning to avail themselves, and to turn it to their own profit or gratification †. Hence

\* It is to this disposition, and the impostures to which it gave birth, that the celebrated Gibbon artfully ascribes the reception which the works of Jesus obtained among the first Christians. "The primitive Christians," says he, "perpetually trod on mystic ground, and their minds were exercised by the habits of believing the most extraordinary events. They felt, or they fancied, that on every side they were assaulted by dæmons, comforted by visions, instructed by prophecy, and surprisingly delivered from danger, sickness, and death itself, by the supplications of the church. The real or imaginary prodigies, of which they so frequently conceived themselves to be the objects, the instruments, or the spectators, *very happily disposed them to adopt with the same ease*, but with far greater justice, the authentic wonders of the evangelical history; and thus miracles, that exceeded not the measure of their own experience, inspired them with the most lively assurance of mysteries, which were acknowledged to surpass the limits of their understanding." Vol. ii. p. 315.

† The impostor Alexander, whose life is written by Lucian, affords a striking instance of this. See particularly vol. i. p. 752. Var. Edition.

arose those swarms of impostors and magicians, which soon after the time of our Saviour infested the heathen and the Christian world; who, as they impiously took upon them that name the better to answer their base designs, proved the means of bringing Christianity itself, its illustrious founder, and his faithful followers, into disgrace.

Of this unhappy number was the Jew, to whom Josephus refers, with his wicked associates; who, as will appear from the sequel, were *Egyptians*, nominally converted from the worship of Isis; and were the persons whom our historian stigmatizes as concerned in the *seduction* of Paulina. Now Josephus says of this Jew and his companions, that they professed to teach, or *unfold*, the *wisdom* of the Mosaic laws; and that they withheld from the temple at Jerusalem the rich presents made to it by Fulvia. It will be found too that they were guilty of theft and robberies, which furnished their enemies with a pretence to charge all the followers of Jesus, without distinction, with these enormities; and that moreover they were, as has



been just stated, chargeable with, at least *causing*, the adultery of Fulvia.

Hear now the noble and indignant apostrophe which the Apostle Paul makes to one of the Jewish Christians at Rome. "Behold! \* thou callest thyself a Jew, and reposest thyself in the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and art taught to distinguish the excellencies of the law, and takest upon thyself to be a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes, *as* possessing the characters of knowledge and truth in the law. Dost thou then, who teachest another, neglect to teach thyself? Dost thou, who preachest against stealing, steal thyself? Dost thou, who forbiddest to commit adultery, commit adultery? Dost thou abhor idols, and yet profanely rob the temple?"

Only compare this address with the account given by our historian, and they must both appear to refer to the same person. Jo-

\* Rom. cap. ii.

sephus says of him, that he *professed* to teach the wisdom of the Mosaic laws : Paul accosts him as one who boasted (for the Apostle is here only making use of his own language) *to be a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes.* Again ; the Jewish historian informs us that he robbed the temple, (though, as will hereafter be manifest, he was the occasion of abolishing the *idol of Isis*), that he committed adultery, that he was guilty of stealing. And does not our honoured Apostle suppose him chargeable with these very crimes ? It appears then to me indisputable that they had the same man in view. But Paul addresses him as one of the Jewish converts in that city ; whence it is evident that he professed to be one of those converts, to whom he directed his Epistle. So much then for my first proposition, that the Jew of whom we are speaking was one who professed to teach Christianity in Rome.

More proofs might be adduced in its support. But as the first proposition is implied in the second, it will be needless to labour

the point in this place. My next object therefore is to shew,

II. *That the ill-treatment which the Jews suffered from Tiberius and the senate, together with their banishment from Italy, were principally owing to the introduction of Christianity into Rome, and to the rapid progress it made there, in spite of the opposition which it received from the government, and from its other enemies.*

In support of this proposition I shall allege, in the first place, a paragraph from *Tacitus*. The passage to which I allude is well known, and runs thus—"Actum \* et de sacris Ægyptiis Judaïcisque pellendis. Factumque patrum consultum, ut quatuor millia libertini generis, eâ superstitione infecta, in insulam Sardiniam veherentur, coërcendis illic latrociniis; et si gravitate cœli interiissent, vile damnum: cæteri cederent Italiâ, nisi certam ante diem profanos ritus exuissent." That is, *in the same year was brought before the senate a motion for abolishing the Egyptian*

\* An. lib. ii. cap. lxxxv.

and Jewish rites : and it was decreed, that four thousand of that slavish race, who were infected with that superstition, should be conveyed into the island of Sardinia, there to be restrained from robberies ; where if they perished through the severity of the climate, the loss would not be great ; and that the rest of them should leave Italy, unless within an appointed time they should have relinquished their profane rites.

More is said by this historian on the subject ; but we shall produce the remainder in its proper place. On the foregoing extract several remarks are to be made, which go to confirm my assertion.

1. It appears from the words of *Tacitus*, that the Roman senate had observed a *distinction* between the Jewish people in that city. " Four thousand of them were infected with the Jewish superstition ; that is, were in a peculiar manner influenced by it—professed a greater zeal for its institutions, and made more strenuous efforts, and more considerable sacrifices, in supporting and propagating it. These accordingly were punished with greater se-



verity, and banished into climates, where they were likely to perish. Others of the Jews, that is, such as were *not infected* in that high degree, experienced more lenity; and, so far from being exterminated, they were permitted to continue at Rome; provided they gave up such rites as were thought profane, or hostile to the gentile religion.

Now *I say that the four thousand men*, whom Tacitus represents as being in a peculiar degree infected, and who on that account suffered banishment, were those of the Jews at Rome that had received the Gospel. This fact is, I presume, proved by the two following considerations—1. That the Jewish converts exhibited far greater zeal for the new religion, far more ardour to promote its interests in the world, than the unbelieving part of the Jews did for the Jewish—2. That the Apostle Paul, as will appear in the sequel, alludes, in terms the most pointed, to their banishment, and addresses these exiles as the warm and resolute followers of Jesus.

2. The Roman historian insinuates, that these men, who had been exiled from Italy,

were guilty of *robberies*, or of *stealing* and *plundering*—"Four thousand of that slavish race were conveyed into the island of Sardinia, there to be restrained from *robberies*." From the drift of this clause it is obvious, that the writer considered them as guilty of these enormities, while yet at Rome; and that they were banished, in part, on this account. This insinuation, we shall presently see, is also made by *Suetonius*, though it is palpably false, as we are assured from the testimonies of Philo and Josephus, who tell us that they were all innocent of such charges, and that *only four men* were really guilty. Here then we have another criterion that distinguished the first followers of Jesus. Virtuous and harmless as they were, beyond any other race of men, nevertheless the breath of calumny, in every country, endeavoured to paint them as *robbers*, *defrauders*, and *plunderers*. Of this I shall here produce one or two instances. The first is a monumental inscription, concerning the Christians, in the time of *Nero*. Lardner has thus translated it—TO NERO CLAUDIUS CÆSAR AUGUSTUS, HIGH PRIEST, FOR CLEARING THE PROVINCE OF ROBBERS, AND THOSE WHO

TAUGHT MANKIND A NEW SUPERSTITION.

Justin Martyr, in his *Second Apology* \*, has recorded these words of one *Lucius*, which he had addressed to *Urbicus*, a Roman magistrate, on account of the unjust sentence passed by him on an innocent Christian. "Why should you condemn a man, convicted neither of adultery nor fornication; nor proved to be a murderer or a *thief*, or a *plunderer*; nor, finally, accused of any other crime, but only of *professing* the Christian name?"

Here we see a disciple of Jesus doomed to death as a *thief* and a *robber*, though the sentence by which he stood condemned was flagrantly unjust. There is, however, reason to suppose, that many men of this description had assumed the Christian profession, and hence furnished the enemies of Christ with grounds for extending those accusations to all his innocent followers. This, I believe, was peculiarly the case in Judæa,

\* Ap. ii. p. 7. Ox. Ed.

where banditti of this kind abounded, and where the malice of the Jewish people was extremely active in ranking and confounding such unworthy persons with the virtuous disciples of Jesus. The pen of Josephus, however, though not *openly* employed in their defence, has protected them from such calumnies, and holds them up, as we have seen in a passage already considered, as the exclusive enemies of the *Sicarii*, the general name of those assassins and robbers.

3. In the above citation from Tacitus it is expressly said, that the design of the senate in banishing the Jews and Egyptians was the *abolition of their* rites. Were the emperor and his council, let me ask, accustomed to exercise such severities on the Jewish and Egyptian nations? No; it was the wise and just policy of the Roman government to tolerate, and even to protect, every nation in the enjoyment of its religious ceremonies; and Tiberius, as well as Augustus, it is well known, had hitherto distinguished himself by his indulgencies to the Jews. And what cause had he now for this extraordinary change in his conduct? Some cause there



must have been; and none that is adequate to the effect can, I presume, be found, except in the prevailing genius of Christianity, in the extraordinary zeal of its first propagators, and in the menacing aspect which it was at first supposed to assume in respect to the Roman power, as well as the Gentile superstitions.

Josephus, indeed, tells us, that this calamity was brought upon the Jewish people *for the wickedness of four men*. Considering these men as chief agents in propagating the new religion, which they corrupted by their previous immoral principles, and disgraced by their unworthy conduct, we may justly admit the fact. But detach them from the influence which their doctrine produced upon the body of the Jews and Egyptians; that is, regard them as unconnected with the rest of those nations by means of their instruction, and it will appear utterly incredible, that on their account, however flagrant their guilt might have been, all their countrymen should have been exposed to such calamities. To extend to a whole people the crimes committed only by a few, and involve the innocent with the

guilty in the punishment due to the latter alone, is a degree of barbarity totally inconsistent with the principles and the practice of the Roman government.

But upon the supposition that the banishment of the two nations was occasioned ultimately by the introduction and prevalence of the Gospel, however cruel and unjust a measure, it may be easily explained. The zeal which the converts displayed to support and propagate their faith, must have necessarily excited great tumult and confusion throughout the city. Admitting, what I am afraid is not to be admitted, that its friends employed only fair and laudable means in its behalf; yet such were the intemperate zeal, and the inveterate prejudices of their adversaries, that they unavoidably opposed to them violence and clamour; and as the contending parties were very numerous, the tranquillity of the city must have been much disturbed.

The disturbance which thus arose between the believing and unbelieving Jews, was greatly augmented, and rendered more intolerable, by the same dispute breaking out

among the Egyptian priests, most of whom, we shall presently see, became, at least nominal, converts to the faith. The superstition and the vices of the refractory among these priests were no doubt boldly exposed, and attacked by the more virtuous, or the reformed part that deserted them; and the attack, we may well suppose, was repelled and returned with all the fierceness and virulence which conscious guilt usually inspires.

The scenes of tumult and disorder, thus produced, at length awakened the attention, and demanded the interference, of the senate and the emperor; who regarding with the same hostile disposition the rational faith of the Christians, the blind prejudice of the Jews, and the profane rites of the Egyptians, banished them in a mass.

That the restoration of the public peace, and the suppression of tumult, were, at least, the pretended objects which Tiberius had in view, in thus banishing them, we may conclude from *Suetonius*, whose account of the affair is as follows: “*Externas ceremonias, Ægyptios Judaïcosque ritus, compescuit, coactis, qui superstitione eâ tenebantur, reli-*

gias vestes cum instrumento omni comburere. Judæorum juventutem, per speciem sacramenti, in provincias gravioris cœli distribuit: reliquos gentis ejusdem, et similia sectantes, urbe summovit, sub pœnâ perpetuæ servitutis, nisi obtemperassent. Expulit et mathematicos; sed deprecantibus, ac se artem desituros promittentibus, veniam dedit. In primis tuendæ pacis a grassaturis ac latrociniis seditionumque licentiâ curam habuit. Stationes militum per Italiam solito frequentiores disposuit. Romæ castra constituit, quibus prætorianæ cohortes, vagæ ante id tempus, et per hospitia dispersæ, continerentur. Populares tumultus exortos gravissime coërcuit; et, ne orirentur, sedulo curavit\*.” *Foreign superstitions, the Egyptian and the Jewish, Tiberius suppressed; and compelled those who were fettered with it to burn their sacred vestments and utensils. The Jewish youth he distributed, under the pretence of a military oath, into provinces of a severe climate; while the remainder of that nation, with others of similar profession, he removed from the city, under the penalty of perpetual*

\* In Vitâ Tiber. cap. xxxvi.



*slavery, unless they had obeyed. He expelled too the magicians ; but granted pardon to those that recanted and promised to abandon their art. Above all, in order to secure peace, he provided means against those who were licentiously given to plunder, robbery, and sedition. For this purpose he planted along Italy military stations, more numerous than common ; formed a camp at Rome, in which were confined the prætorian bands ; which till then were unrestrained, and distributed in quarters. The tumults which arose among the populace he suppressed with much severity, and exercised great vigilance for preventing similar commotions.*

This passage, which is more decisive in my favour than even that of Tacitus, demands nevertheless some observations to display its full import.

1. It appears from it, as well as from the former writer, that one part of the Jews and Egyptians were more attached to their principles than the other, and on this account experienced from the Roman government greater hardships—"He compelled those" (says our author) "who were fettered with

that superstition, to burn their sacred vestments and utensils—and distributed them into provinces of a severe climate: while the *remainder* of that nation, with others of a similar profession, he removed from the city.”

2. Here we are told that Tiberius expelled the magicians, but pardoned those who promised to abandon their art. This sort of men had been before forbidden the city by Augustus, who was no great friend to their profession. But is it not surprising that Tiberius should have done this; since it is well known that he was passionately devoted to magic, and was always surrounded, as Juvenal says \* of him, by a *herd of them*? From his prohibiting them on this occasion, we may fairly infer, that their art was directed to some object which they had not before in view, and which he conceived to be prejudicial to his interest in some respect or other; or, in different words, that it was exercised

\* Visne salutari sicut Sejanus? habere  
Tantundem? atque illi sellas donare curules?  
Illum exercitibus præponere? tutor haberi  
Principis augustâ Caprearum in rupe sedentis  
Cum grege Chaldæo? Sat. x. 90.

in support of a foreign superstition, which he hated, and sought to suppress, as subversive of his own authority, and hostile to the public tranquillity.

That this was the case, we may presume from his banishing those Magi, in conjunction with the Jewish and Egyptian sects. But this presumption amounts, I conceive, to a certainty, if we take into consideration a passage to be presently produced, which proves that these very men were nominal converts to the Gospel, having for their object the establishment of Christianity in Rome, and the deification of its author.

The public peace, says Suetonius, was disturbed; and in order to restore tranquillity, and prevent similar commotions, Tiberius first suppressed the Jewish and Egyptian rites, and exterminated their professors from Italy. He then formed camps in Rome, appointed military stations throughout the country, restored among the soldiers a stricter discipline, and imposed upon them greater vigilance than before in preventing disorder, or in punishing the authors of it.

These provisions, we shall presently see from a paragraph in *Philo*, extended to Greece, and every other department of the empire.

Now it is evident, that as these precautions were *new* and *extraordinary*, they must have been occasioned by some new and extraordinary circumstance in the state of the times; so new and extraordinary, indeed, as to fill Tiberius and the senate with the greatest apprehensions, and to put the vast machine of the Roman government in motion against it. The question then is, what that circumstance could have been, which called forth, and could justify, such singular measures? The following statement can, I imagine, alone furnish an adequate and rational solution of this difficulty. A general expectation, derived originally from the Jewish prophets, and thence introduced into the Sibylline oracles, prevailed among the Heathens, as well as the Jewish nation, that some great personage was about that time to appear in the East; who, like the sun, would ascend the meridian of human glory, and spread over the earth the splendour of universal dominion. Men from the East came to Rome with the



news, that this prince had already appeared in Judæa, who had given undoubted proofs of his divine commission, not only in the works he performed, but also in the superior wisdom which he displayed. This news, as it was then generally understood by the Jews and Gentiles, threatened the power of Cæsar, spread itself through the city, and brought to it many converts from among the Jews and Egyptians : and we are informed, as will be seen in the sequel, from an authority not to be resisted, that about this time the great mass of the people throughout the whole empire expressed a decided inclination to throw off the Roman yoke, and enlist under the banners of the new and beneficent king of the Jews, under whom they fondly expected eternal peace, prosperity, and freedom.

On the supposition that these facts are true, the measures adopted by Tiberius and the senate have an adequate cause, and are such as might be reasonably expected : and no other cause, it is maintained, can be assigned, that is in any degree commensurate with such effects,

2. The above statement accounts also for

the cruel and unexampled manner in which the Jews and Egyptians were on this occasion treated by the emperor. The persons who taught in the city that Jesus was the Messiah, he necessarily regarded as preachers of *treason* and *sedition* ; in as much as they proclaimed a king opposite to himself. This circumstance of course filled him with alarm and resentment, which he exercised not only on those that taught the new faith, but on all that had embraced or countenanced it. His best security, he seems to have thought, consisted in first depriving the whole Jewish and Egyptian nations of those civil and religious rights which they had hitherto enjoyed unmolested, and then banishing them into climates which might prove fatal to their constitutions. Nor did he think it safe to rest even here. Such of them as were peculiarly infected with their superstition, and were capable of bearing arms, the senate, no doubt at his instigation, forced into the military service, contrary, as well to his usual clemency, and to the spirit of the Jewish laws, as to a law made in their favour by Augustus.

This violence, offered to the plainest dic-

tates of justice and liberty, Tiberius adopted not so much because their service was necessary, but because it was the most effectual means of gratifying his revenge, of bursting their attachment to the prince under whose banners they had just enlisted, and of restoring their allegiance to himself. And hence appears the meaning of Suetonius in the following clause : “ And the Jewish youth he distributed, under THE PRETENCE OF AN OATH, into countries of a severe climate.” But a portion of these young men, as Josephus informs us, understanding that this was the object of the oath, had the firmness to resist being enlisted, though the consequence was death. In this respect, be it remarked, they acted conformably to the conduct generally observed by the Christians in the first and second centuries, who rejected, it is well known, not only all the concerns of the state, however lucrative, but every station in the army, though the most honourable, as being opposite to that allegiance which they swore to their new king, and to the beneficent spirit of his Gospel. Hence Philo, their immortal apologist, who, though to this day supposed to have continued the disciple of

Moses, gloriously employed his talents and his influence to promote the cause, and defend the followers, of Jesus, thus speaks of them: "None can be found among them that manufacture darts, arrows, swords, helmets, breast-plates, nor even such weapons as might be converted to bad purposes in the time of peace; much less do any of them engage in those arts that are useful in war."

In terms equally strong and eloquent does this noble author describe their love of freedom, and their hatred of tyranny. "As to slaves," he adds, "they have none; but all are free, and all equally labour for the common good. The supporters of slavery they condemn as unjust and base despots, by whom are violated the sacred laws of nature, who, like a common parent, hath begotten all mankind without distinction, and educated them in the genuine bonds of fraternity—fraternity consisting not in name, but in reality." Such are the lovely sentiments which the benevolent Jesus and his faithful followers, in ancient times, entertained, and which the Gospel almost in every page inculcates. No blessing, indeed, conferred upon us by the



bounty of heaven, is so valuable as the Christian religion, for its subserviency (were it permitted to operate in its native energy) to the equality, to the rights, and to the improvement of mankind.

No blessing, I repeat, bestowed upon us by the bounty of heaven, is so valuable for its subserviency to these ends. By the magnificent views which faith discloses, beyond the reach of unaided reason, it inspires boldness and sublimity of sentiment. Affording the most animating motives to virtue, it supports dignity and stability of character. It exhibits our relation to the common Parent in the mildest light, and by that means points out to aspiring pride *the common level of all his offspring*, and teaches it to seek no distinctions, but such as flow from superior rectitude of conduct, or a greater comprehension of intellect. While reason leads the mind to reflect on the order that pervades, the constancy that preserves, the harmony that unites, the natural and moral world; revelation draws it by "the cords of love" to imitate the goodness that presides over the universe, and raises it to a higher element,

where, with reviving freshness, it inhales the æthereal breath of benevolence, peace, and magnanimity.

The Gospel, which, under the direction of reason, is subservient to these noble views, has nevertheless become, in the hands of ignorance and cunning, the instrument of quite opposite effects. Veiled with the fraud of pretended mystery, tyranny has perverted it into a mean of slavery ; and priestcraft, instead of holding it up as the light of the world, has employed it as a torch to spread the flame of persecution, and to cloud the human understanding with the smoke of fanaticism.

Christianity, however, on its first appearance, produced, on those who properly understood and cheerfully embraced it, an influence congenial to its native tendency. It inspired them with sentiments of manly, but rational freedom ; it emancipated them, at least in thought, from subordination to despotic power, and raised them to the dignity of being subjects of the divine government, and heirs of eternal life.

Actuated by the spirit which, in this respect, it inspired, the *Christians* at Rome opposed the abuses of the Roman government, which was rendered extremely oppressive by the wicked administration of Sejanus.

This laudable opposition, as might be expected, brought upon them his hatred and calumny. Their resistance he ascribed to sinister motives, and exerted with success his influence with Tiberius and the senate to procure their expulsion; and hence it is that Philo, the celebrated Jew above mentioned, assigns the ill treatment which his countrymen received to the misrepresentations of Sejanus alone. “\* All nations,” he says, “though prejudiced against the Jews, have been careful not to abolish the Jewish rites; and the same caution was preserved in the

\* Τοι γὰρ ἐν πανταχοῦ πάντες, εἰ καὶ φύσει διεκείντο πρὸς Ἰουδαίους οὐκ ευμενῶς, εὐλαβῶς εἶχον, ἐπὶ καθαιρεσθαι, τινῶν τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν νομιμῶν προσαιψασθαι· καὶ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου μὲν τοι τοῦτον αὐτοῦν τρόπον, καὶ τοι τῶν ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ παρακινήθεντων, ἥνικα Σηϊανὸς ἐσκεύωρε τὴν ἐπιθεσιν. Εἰγὼ γὰρ εὐθεὶς μετὰ τὴν ἐκεῖνου τελευτὴν ὅτι τὰ κατηγορηθέντα τῶν ψευδοκρίτων τὴν Ρωμὴν Ἰουδαίων ψευδεῖς ἦσαν διαβόλαι, πλάσματα Σηϊανοῦ τοῦ ἐθνὸς ἀρπάσαι θελοντός, ὅπερ ἡ μόνον ἡ μαλίστα ᾗδει βουλὰς ἀνοσιαῖς καὶ πράξεσιν ἀντιβησόμενον. Leg. p. 698.

reign of Tiberius : though, indeed, the Jews in Italy have been distressed by the machinations of Sejanus. For after his death the emperor became sensible that the accusations alleged against the Jews in Italy were calumnious, the mere inventions of Sejanus ; WHO WAS EAGER TO DEVOUR A NATION THAT, AS HE KNEW, MADE THE MOST DETERMINED RESISTANCE TO HIS IMPIOUS COUNSELS AND DESIGNS."

That the distress here noticed by Philo refers to the expulsion of the Jews, which Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius, have recorded, can in no wise be disputed.

The principal, though not the only, calumny by which Sejanus had prejudiced the emperor against the Jewish people, and procured their banishment from Italy, seems to have been the common artifice adopted in every age by the supporters of corruption and despotism. Finding them the determined enemies of tyranny and oppression, he accused them of hostility to the government, charged them with the secret, if not the avowed, object of subverting the throne of



Cæsar, and of raising to the empire of the world some favourite prince of their own nation.

These charges, it must be confessed, as the spiritual nature of our Lord's kingdom was not as yet understood at Rome even by the disciples, might have some foundation in truth. But whether they were true or false, the confidence which at the time Tiberius had in this base minister, insured credit to his representations; and accordingly the whole Jewish nation, as Josephus and Philo attest, were exterminated from Italy.

But it does not, it may be said, appear from the above extract, that the Jews of whom Philo speaks were converts to Christianity. That he does not distinguish them by the *Christian* name is what I readily grant. But the book whence the passage is taken, contains, I presume, evidence sufficient to substantiate this fact. To this evidence, however, I cannot at present have recourse; as it requires the previous developement of several events hitherto unknown. I content myself therefore with now producing the

direct testimony of *Orosius*, an ecclesiastical writer in the fifth century. His words are to this effect—"Tiberius proposed to the senate that Christ should be *made a God*, with his own vote in his favour. The senate, moved with indignation that it had not been, as was usual, proposed for them to determine respecting the reception of his religion, rejected his deification, and decreed, THAT THE CHRISTIANS BY AN EDICT SHOULD BE BANISHED FROM THE CITY; ESPECIALLY AS SEJANUS, THE PRÆFECT OF TIBERIUS, MOST OBSTINATELY RESISTED THE RECEPTION OF HIS FAITH \*."

I will add two or three remarks on this important passage.

1. It is here positively and in direct terms asserted, that the Jews and Egyptians, of whom Philo, Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius, speak, were *believers in Jesus Christ*.

2. Philo ascribes the calamities which the

\* Oros. lib. vii. cap. iv. or Lard. vol. vii. p. 243.

Jewish people suffered in Italy to the wicked machinations of Sejanus. This very assertion is implied in the words of Orosius—*The senate decreed, that the Christians by an edict should be banished from the city ; especially as Sejanus, the præfect of Tiberius, most obstinately resisted the reception of his faith.*

3. Nevertheless there appears some difference between these two writers. According to Philo, the Jews were distressed by Tiberius *himself*, instigated indeed by his base minister : but Orosius says that they suffered from the senate, even in opposition to the emperor.

Of the account as stated by the Jewish writer no doubt can reasonably be entertained, as he was a competent and unbiassed judge of the affair, having flourished at the time ; and not only that, but having himself investigated the whole business, in consequence of his being the very person whom the Christians at Alexandria (whither they had for the most part repaired after their expulsion from Italy) sent to Rome to plead their cause, and to justify their innocence

from the charges alleged against them. His statement, therefore, if found contradictory, is more to be depended upon than that of a writer in the fifth century. It will, however, soon be perceived, that the two authors do not contradict each other in reality; since one only relates circumstances which the other has omitted.

The well-known words of Tertullian on this subject are to this purpose. "Tiberius, in whose time the Christian name made its appearance in the world, after he had been informed of the things which revealed *the divinity of Jesus*, brought it before the senate, with the favour of his own suffrage. The senate, because he had not approved of himself being deified, rejected the deification of Jesus. Cæsar, however, continued of the same opinion, and threatened punishment on such as accused the Christians \*."

On this passage, too, a few observations may be made.

1. It appears from *Tertullian*, as well as

\* Tertul. Apol. cap. v.



from *Orosius*, that the persons of whom Philo speaks, as being distressed in Italy, were converts to the Christian religion. "Cæsar, however, continued of the same opinion, and threatened punishment on such as accused THE CHRISTIANS."

2. It is manifest from Tertullian, that some accusations were lodged before Tiberius and the senate against the followers of Jesus. And the same thing is implied in the words of Philo—" Though, indeed," says he, " the Jews in Italy have been distressed in consequence of the machinations of Sejanus. For after his death the emperor became sensible that *the accusations alleged against the Jews* in Italy were calumnies, the mere inventions of Sejanus."

3. It is farther obvious from Tertullian, that the emperor Tiberius *discountenanced* those accusations, and threatened those that presented them. *Orosius* goes still farther, and attests, that he announced by an edict the punishment of death against such as accused the Christians. This interesting fact is confirmed by the testimony of Philo, whose

words are to this effect: " To the constituted authorities Tiberius every where sent orders not to molest, in their several cities, the men of that nation, excepting the guilty alone (who were very few); but, on the contrary, to regard as a trust committed to their care, both the people themselves, and their institutions, which, like oil, soften their votaries with the love of peace, and brace them with firmness of character."

4. This fine apology which Philo. makes for the followers of Jesus, in common with the rest of the Jewish nation, of whom they were yet considered as a sect, developes the true state of his mind respecting *Christianity* and its *founder*. Had he not been a well-wisher to both, he would have been very far from standing forward on this occasion as the champion of its votaries. This consideration farther directs our attention to the valuable book whence this extract has been taken, as having originated in circumstances occasioned by the prevalence of the Gospel, and intended to rescue its professors from the calumnies and persecutions brought upon them by the malice of their enemies.

5. The above testimony of Philo, Tertulian, and Orosius, will account for a remarkable fact, which is thus recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. ix. 31. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

"This rest of the churches," says Doctor Lardner, "will be easily accounted for from the following particulars. Soon after Caligula's accession, the Jews at Alexandria suffered very much from the Egyptians in that city, and at length their oratories there were all destroyed. In the third year of Caligula, A. D. 39, Petronius was sent into Syria with orders to set the statue of the emperor in the temple of Jerusalem. It is not improbable but that the Jews of Judæa might be affected at the condition of their countrymen at Alexandria, where by this time they were almost ruined; but this order from Caligula was a thunderstroke. There is, indeed, some doubt whether Petronius published this order in the year of our Lord 39 or 40. But, whenever it was made known, the Jews must have been

too much engaged afterwards to mind any thing else ; as may appear from the accounts which Philo and Josephus have given us of this affair.

“ Some learned men have ascribed this rest of the churches to the conversion of St. Paul, who had been a very zealous persecutor. But this is, in my opinion, to do St. Paul a great deal of wrong on one hand, and too much honour on the other. It appears to me a great injustice to ascribe to him all the sufferings of the Christians, which ensued upon the death of Stephen, when after his conversion we find the Jews of Judæa, Damascus, and every other place, were filled with malice and spite against Christianity, and against St. Paul, and every one else of that way. On the other hand, it is doing him, at the same time, too much honour. St. Paul was then but a young man, and, though a forward and active instrument, yet he could not be more than an instrument in that persecution. It cannot be supposed, that whilst he was with the high-priests and Pharisees they were directed and animated by him, and that when he had left them their



spirits were so sunk, that they could no longer pursue their old measures. His own dangers at Damascus and Jerusalem are a proof to the contrary.

“ According to the description St. Luke gives us of this rest of the churches, in the words just now transcribed, it was very extensive even all over Judæa and Galilee, and Samaria, and very complete; and the churches had no molestation. So considerable an event must have been owing to some other considerable event with which the whole people of that country was affected. I had no sooner read the account which Philo and Josephus have given of the sufferings of the Jews in Alexandria, and the imminent danger of ruin which that whole people in Judæa and other places were in, in the reign of Caligula, but I concluded that this state of their affairs brought on the rest of the Christian churches, which St. Luke speaks of, and which certainly happened about this time. Whether I am in the right or not, others will judge.”  
Lard. vol. i. 97—99.

That the Doctor, however learned and able

in other respects, is not right in this, will, I trust, appear from the three following reasons.

1. The calamity brought upon the Jewish nation by the impious attempt of Caligula to place his statue in the temple at Jerusalem, will appear hereafter to have been occasioned by the circumstance of the Christians in Egypt having deified and worshipped Jesus Christ; which prompted that base emperor to proclaim his own deification, and to claim the same divine honours with our Lord. The distress and danger which hence threatened the Jews, must therefore, instead of suspending their fury against the Christians in Judæa and other places, have been the means of exasperating them the more; since they looked upon them as the primary, though the innocent, cause of the general distress.

2. The cause to which Lardner assigns the tranquillity of the churches conveys (though he was not aware of it) the severest reflection upon them. It supposes that the disciples of Christ were so unfeeling, so destitute of all regard to their brethren the Jews, as to enjoy

*rest*, to be *comforted*, and to be *edified*, at a time when the whole country was involved in one scene of horror and consternation ; and that too by means of this horror and consternation. Were they capable of this, they might more fitly be deemed monsters than the followers of the benevolent Jesus.

3. The cause here alleged for the peace of the churches is erroneous, in as much as a cause more direct, simple, and efficacious, is assigned by the concurrent testimony of Philo, Tertullian, and Orosius, that Tiberius, a little before his death, sent orders to the magistrates throughout the empire to protect the Christians ; and we are assured by the former writer, that in consequence of those orders, and other provisions made by that emperor, profound peace and happiness prevailed in every one of the provinces ; which continued uninterrupted, at least a year, or perhaps two, after the accession of Caligula. Hear a part of his words on the subject : “ What person, on beholding *Caius*, when, after the death of Tiberius Cæsar, he had assumed dominion over every land and sea ; which dominion held every country, east,

west, north, and south, in tranquillity and order; which united every province in social harmony, the barbarian with the Greek, and the Greek with the barbarian, the soldier with the citizen, and the citizen with the soldier, all of whom blended together in congratulating the return and in enjoying the blessings of universal peace—who, I say, on beholding this felicity under Caius, which it exceeds the power of words to describe, would not be filled with extasy at the sight \* ?” If, then, such was the happy state of every city, of every place, in the Roman empire, in consequence of the laws established by Tiberius, the churches throughout all Judæa and Galilee, and Samaria, must *have shared* in the general tranquillity; and it was natural therefore that they should have *rest, be edified, and walk in the fear of the Lord; that, finally, they should be comforted by the Holy Ghost, and be multiplied.*

I cannot conclude this subject without observing how remarkably an observation of *Eusebius* coincides with the above words of

\* See p. 993. Par. edition.



the sacred historian. "Tiberius," says he, "in whose time the Christian name appeared in the world, on being informed of the divinity of Jesus from Palestine, where it was first taught, communicated it to the senate, making it manifest to them that he approved that doctrine; but since the senate too did not approve of it, they rejected it. But Tiberius continued in the same opinion, and threatened death to the accusers of the Christians; this being suggested to his mind by Divine Providence, *that the doctrine of the Gospel, having the beginning of its race clear from obstruction, might freely run through every land*\*."

This last clause is thus rendered by the Latin translator. "Quam quidem sententiam cœlestis Providentia Tiberii Cæsaris menti idcirco infuderat, ut Evangelii sermo, *qui nunc primum nasci cœperat*, absque ullo impedimento per universum orbem spargetur." By which, I presume, he appears to have missed the force and propriety of the passage. The expression of Eusebius is ele-

\* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. cap. ii. ad finem.

gant and forcible, and seems to have been copied from the following words of Paul—  
 “ Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the  
 WORD OF THE LORD *may have free course,*  
*and be glorified,* even as it is with you.” 2  
*Thessal.* chap. iii. 1.

It remains next to reconcile the difference observable between Philo and Tertullian, with his followers, Eusebius, Orosius, and others.

Tiberius, it appears from the fact of his expelling them from Rome, and depriving them of their liberties, as attested by Philo, proved himself, at first, hostile to the Christians and their cause. Its professors he conceived to entertain sentiments inimical to his person and government ; the prevalence of it threw the city into confusion, and awakened in every department of the empire the spirit of disaffection. Those too among the Egyptians, who had embraced the Gospel, and continued to teach it, imposed, it is highly probable, on Tiberius by magical artifices, which of course, after detection, called forth his resentment, which naturally extended to

the rest of the Egyptians and Jews ; disposing him by that means to listen to the accusations of Sejanus, and to concur with the senate in expelling them from the city. “ But Tiberius,” says Philo, “ after the death of Sejanus, became sensible that the accusations alleged against the Jews in Italy were calumnies, the mere inventions of Sejanus.”

Here we are told, on unquestionable authority, that a remarkable change took place in the conduct of that emperor towards the Jewish nation that had received the Gospel in Italy. But what could have been the cause of this happy change ? An attention to the words of Tertullian will unfold to us what the cause was. “ Tiberius,” says he, “ in whose time the Christian name made its appearance in the world, *after he had been informed of the things* which revealed the divinity of Jesus,” &c. Tiberius then, it seems, changed his behaviour and disposition towards the Christians, *after he had received some information from Judæa*, respecting our Lord. Hence we are able to unravel the whole business. The emperor was so much impressed by those scenes which the fame

of his miracles and resurrection produced in Rome and other places, that he inquired concerning the matter either of Pilate, then governor of Judæa, or of some other persons who had equal means to know the truth. These informed him of the reality of the facts ascribed to Jesus ; and perhaps the account which he received led him to conclude that the Jews, in general, were free from the charges ascribed to them by their enemies. He therefore altered his conduct towards them, and became the friend of the very people whom a little before he hated and persecuted ; and in order to protect them from farther violence, and to repair, in some measure, the injuries which they had already suffered, “ he every where sends orders to the constituted authorities not to molest, in their several cities, the men of that nation ; but, on the contrary, to regard as a trust committed to their care, both the people and their institutions ; which, like oil, soften their votaries with the love of peace, and brace them with firmness of character.” And, finally, that he might manifest his conviction of the person whom the Jews and Egyptians regarded as their master, being an extraordi-



nary character, and endued with surprising powers, he proposed to the senate a decree for his deification.

From this representation it is evident, that the narratives of Tertullian and Orosius do not go back to the *beginning* of the disturbances at Rome, but commence only with the change which took place in the behaviour of Tiberius towards the Christians. Those writers have noticed and rendered prominent only his subsequent friendship, but left his former enmity in the shade. Their motive for this will appear hereafter to proceed from a desire to bury in eternal oblivion the *origin* of the divinity and supernatural birth of Jesus Christ.

The senate, we are told, rejected the motion which the emperor proposed to them respecting Jesus, and assigned as a reason, that he himself had refused the honour of deification.

From the use of the verb *probaverat* in the perfect past, and from the opposition here drawn between Jesus and Tiberius, we might fairly conclude that the subject had before

that time been agitated in Rome; and this conclusion well agrees with the explanation given above of the disagreement between Philo and Tertullian.

When the miracles and resurrection of our Saviour first induced his mistaken followers to represent him as a god in that city, nothing was more natural than that the enemies of the Gospel should instigate the emperor to proclaim his own divinity in opposition to him. But Tiberius, having had reason to believe that the person whom the magicians regarded as divine was really a supernatural being, declined the competition, as vain and impious; and accordingly “ordered that no flamines, or priests, should be chosen in honour of him; also that no statues or images should be erected for him, but with his permission, and on the sole condition that they should be exhibited as ornaments of the buildings, and not be ranked with the effigies of the gods \*.”

\* “Le Clerc objects, that the true reading in Tertullian is not *quia in se non probaverat*, but *quia non ipse probaverat*. Be it so: the meaning is the same. *Ipse* must intend the emperor, not the senate. The other sense is absurd, and next

Now when the emperor, having, instead of the persecutor, become the patron of the Jews and Christians, endeavoured in good earnest to sanction the divinity of their master, the senate made the above prohibition a specious pretence for resisting his attempt; and lest their opposition should provoke his displeasure, they artfully concealed it under the veil of a handsome compliment.

The reader, I trust, is now satisfied, that the second proposition, which I have undertaken to prove, is no longer a supposition, but a fact. Lest, however, it be still doubted, whether the men mentioned by Josephus as being expelled from Italy, were, at least in part, the followers of Jesus, and whether their sufferings were occasioned by the new faith they had embraced, I will farther confirm it by the testimony of two or three heathen writers, who are authorities sufficient of themselves to decide the point.

to a contradiction, and therefore not likely to be right. And at the same time it is a rude and needless affront. The other interpretation represents a handsome compliment, and a compliment not without foundation. For it is very true that Tiberius had himself declined receiving divine honours." *Lar. vol. vii. p. 239.*

Seneca the philosopher has (Epistle cviii.) this interesting and curious passage :

“ Since I have began explaining to thee with how much greater ardour I have applied myself to philosophy in my youth than I pursued it when old, I shall not be ashamed to confess the love which *Sotion* infused into me respecting *Pythagoras*. He taught me why that philosopher, and why Sextius after him, abstained from animals. The reason for this, in both, was different ; but in each it was noble. Sextius believed that there is sufficient provision for man without blood, and that a habit of cruelty is generated when *butchering* is made to administer to pleasure. The subjects of luxury, he added, ought to be diminished ; and insisted that a *variety* of food is hostile to sound health, and uncongenial to our bodies.

“ But Pythagoras affirmed that all things were united together by some natural affinity, and that different beings passed over, by a kind of commerce, into different forms. According to him, no soul admits of either annihilation, or indeed inactivity ; excepting in



the short time while she is removing to another body. We might have marked her periodical transitions through several habitations, and then her return again into man. In the mean time she creates in men a dread of murder and parricide ; since they might fall, unconscious, upon the soul of a parent, and, by their knife or their bite, violate a mansion in which some kindred spirit dwelt. *Sotion*, when he had explained these things, and augmented them by arguments of his own, added, ‘ Do not you believe that souls are destined for different bodies, in succession, and that the removal of them from one into the other is what we call death ? Do not you believe that in animals, tame or wild, and even in those which people the water, resideth that spirit which before animated man ? Do not you believe that nothing in this world absolutely perisheth, but only changeth its situation ; that not merely celestial objects revolve through the same circumscribed limits, but that living beings also proceed through similar vicissitudes, and souls are borne along the same destined round ? These are points which have been believed by eminent men. Therefore suspend your own

judgment, and ponder these arguments impartially in your mind. If they be just, to abstain from animals is moral purity ; if false, it is still frugality. Admitting this were matter of credulity, what loss can it occasion to me ? I plunder merely the food of lions and vultures.' Influenced by these arguments I began to abstain from animals, and in the course of one year I found it not only an easy but a pleasant habit. You will ask, how then I came to desist from such abstinence ? The season of my youth had fallen on the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. AT THAT TIME THE RITES OF A FOREIGN SUPERSTITION CAME TO BE AGITATED, AND AMIDST ITS SUBJECTS LAY A CONTROVERSY ABOUT ABSTAINING FROM CERTAIN ANIMALS. At the solicitations of my father, who felt, not so much the dread of *calumny*, as hatred to philosophy, I returned to my former custom ; nor was it with difficulty that he persuaded me to indulge in a better diet \*."

\* In Tiberii Cæsaris principatum juventæ tempus incidit : alienigenarum sacra movebantur : sed inter argumenta superstitionis ponebatur quorundam animalium abstinentia. PATRE MEO ROGANTE, QUI NON CALUMNIAM TIMEBAT, SED PHILOSOPHIAM ODERAT. ad pristinam consuetudinem redii. Epist. cviii. p. 426. Elzev. ed.

It is agreed among critics, that by *foreign superstition* Seneca means the *Jewish religion*, and that the discussion took place at the period when Tiberius banished the Jews from Rome.

The controversy concerning the use of animal food, be it farther observed, Seneca represents as *then* newly introduced. This is apparent from the verb *movebatur*, which he uses, and which, metaphorically applied, signifies to put in motion a question not *before* agitated.

Now we are assured, on good authority, that when Christianity was first propagated among the Gentiles, a dispute, of the kind which Seneca mentions, was every where excited by its propagation. For, the Apostles, in conformity to the decree of the first synod held in Jerusalem, enjoined on the Gentile converts "the necessity of abstaining from eating sacrifices to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled." This injunction must have met with an unfavourable reception even among those who had embraced the Gospel; and from its enemies it could expect

nothing but the most determined opposition. It must, therefore, wherever it was imposed, have given rise to *dispute*: and, indeed, the change it was intended to produce in the habits of those who received the faith, formed one of the many serious difficulties which the early preachers had to encounter in establishing among the Gentile world the pure religion of Jesus \*.

But while they attempted to restrain, in this respect, the impure excesses of the heathens, they had to encounter the opposite prejudices of the Jews. The former imposed on themselves no restraints in the use of animal food; the latter submitted to many unnecessary restrictions. The Christian adopted the medium, which reason and decency sug-

\* The *Egyptians*, and particularly the *priests*, formed an exception to this general remark; since they, as well as the Jews, had always been accustomed to abstain from the use of animal food. *Plutarch* speaks of them thus:

Οἱ μὲν ἱερεῖς οὕτω δυσχεραίνουσι τὴν τῶν περιττωμάτων φύσιν, ὥστε μὴ μόνον παραιτεῖσθαι τῶν σπέρων τὰ πολλὰ, καὶ τῶν κρέων τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ἰεῖα, πολλὴν ποιοῦντα περιττώσιν· ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλας τῶν σιτίων ἐν ταῖς ἀγνεῖαις ἀφαιρεῖν. *De Isid. et Osir. sect. 5.*



gested, between both ; and hence, in the diffusion of his faith, a controversy arose between him and the Jew on one hand, and with the Gentile on the other.

That a dispute of this kind had been excited in Rome by the introduction of the Gospel, we may infer from a passage of Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. But this I shall defer till I examine the contents of that important performance.

The argument derived from this writer in favour of my proposition may thus be briefly stated. From the words of Seneca it is evident that a dispute among the Gentiles and Jews was excited at Rome, concerning the use of certain animal food. This dispute arose in that city, as it did in other places, when the Gospel was first introduced into it. It follows, therefore, that the period of its introduction there was in his youth, near the latter end of Tiberius's reign, and that the controversy here alluded to was in the number of those questions which broke out before, and ended in the banishment of the Jews and Egyptians.

The passage just quoted from Seneca proves the truth of the opinion held in ancient times, that this distinguished philosopher was acquainted with the doctrines of the Gospel, and in his heart believed them to be true; though for *prudential* motives he gave up that belief. “At that time,” says he, “the rites of a foreign superstition became agitated, and amidst its subjects lay a controversy about certain animals. At the solicitations of my father, who felt not so much the dread of calumny as hatred to philosophy, I resumed my former custom.”

Now it cannot be doubted but that the philosophy of which Seneca is here speaking was connected with the preceding controversy respecting animal food, which it comprehended, as one of its branches. It was therefore no other than the *Christian system*, which indeed was distinguished by the early Christians under the very name of *philosophy*. In proof of this many passages from the fathers might be quoted. But hear the words of a late respectable writer:—“Although Jesus Christ demands attention and reverence under a much more exalted cha-

racter than that of a philosopher, yet it will not be questioned by those who are more inclined to regard the real nature of things than to cavil about words, that the Christian religion merits in the higher sense the appellation of philosophy. For the weighty truths which it teaches respecting God and man are adapted to produce in the minds of men the genuine principles of wisdom, and to conduct them to true felicity. At the same time that it enlightens the understanding, it interests the heart; exhibiting divine wisdom in her fairest form, and supporting her authority by the most powerful sanctions. On these grounds, doubtless, it was that the Christian fathers so frequently spoke of Christianity under the title of true and evangelical *philosophy*, and called the professors of the Christian faith *divine philosophers*." *Enfield's Hist. of Philos.* vol. ii. p. 267, 268.

But besides this, there is another consideration, which renders it extremely probable that by philosophy Seneca meant the Christian system. His father it seems *hated it*, and he was exposed to *calumny* in conse-

quence of having adopted it ; and the reproach attached to him was so great, that his father interfered, and earnestly solicited him to give up its profession.

Fortunately, however, there are other passages in the works of this great philosopher, which show that he was in his heart, though not *openly*, a believer in the Gospel. Of this fact I shall here produce but one instance, leaving others to be cited as occasion may hereafter require them. At the end of the Epistle, lxiii. which he wrote on the death of a friend, he thus expresses himself: "Cogitemus ergo, Lucili charissime, citò nos eo perventuros, quò illum pervenisse mœremus: et fortasse (*si modo sapientum vera est fama, recipitque nos locus aliquis*) quem putamus perisse, præmissus est. *Let us then, my dear LUCILIUS, reflect that we are soon to go to that place where we grieve that our friend is gone; and where perhaps he, whom we supposed to have perished, is sent before us; IF INDEED THE REPORT OF WISE MEN BE TRUE, WHO SAY THAT SUCH A PLACE IS TO RECEIVE US.*"



Observe, the philosopher in this place expresses his faith, though, it must be confessed, not without a mixture of doubt, that there is a life after the present, whither his friend was conveyed, and whither he hoped to be conveyed after him. This faith he grounds upon *the report of certain wise men*.

Now the question is, who could these wise men have been? The teachers of Christianity announced, as the grand article of their faith, a state after the present, where the virtuous shall be rewarded, and the vicious punished. This good news, which alone justified the appropriate appellation of *Gospel*, they erected not upon *philosophical disquisitions*, but upon a *matter of fact*; namely, the resurrection of their divine master, as the prototype of the universal resurrection of mankind. Hence the doctrine of a future state, which they proclaimed, was not so much an *opinion* as a *report*. And, accordingly, Seneca thus denominates it: and as no other set of men, excepting the practisers of Christianity, disseminated a report like this, they must be the very men here alluded to, and *called wise*

*men.* This appellation, together with that of *divine philosophers*, was usually applied to the philosophic part of the Gentile converts, who, we shall hereafter see, were far more numerous than is generally supposed by modern critics in divinity. I will add, that there are several circumstances in the life of Seneca which might lead us to conclude that he was at heart a convert to the Gospel. On no other ground can we so well account for the hatred borne him by Nero, for his banishment from Rome, and particularly for the cruel order which that tyrant gave that he should destroy himself. Indeed, from all these circumstances put together, we may fairly infer that he died, in a certain sense, a *martyr* to the Christian faith; and it is some confirmation of this inference, that the fathers appear to consider him in principle as a disciple of Jesus, though with all his stoicism he had not sufficient resolution to encounter the dangers and disgrace of an explicit profession of the Gospel. Jerom, it is well known, has ranked him in the number of early ecclesiastical writers; and though the letters ascribed to him and Paul be unquestionably spurious, yet they are doubtless founded on

the belief of our philosopher, well known in ancient times, if not, perhaps, upon some real correspondence, now lost, between him and the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

While I am on this subject, I cannot pass by an observation of *Ludovicus Vives* (which I copy from *Jones on the Canon*, vol. ii. p. 98). “When Nero,” says he, “had burnt Rome, and barbarously punished the Christians, under pretence of being guilty of that crime, Seneca desired leave of the emperor to retire to the country for a while ; which he did, in my opinion, because he could not bear to see the daily and cruel massacre of the innocent Christians.” Be it observed, finally, that as Seneca appears from his own writings to have been a Christian in principle, though not altogether so in conduct, on account of his previous education, and his political situation, it will follow that it is very probable the apostle Paul had him, among others, in his eye, when he speaks thus (Phil. i. 13): *My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace.*

The next authority I shall produce is, I

believe, still more decisive, that the Jews and Egyptians, expelled by Tiberius, were, for the most part, the followers of Jesus.

The authority which thus solicits our attention is *Dion Cassius*. In his *Life of Claudius* he has written a passage to this effect\* : “ The Jews, who a second time flocked into the city in such numbers, as rendered it difficult to exclude them without disturbance, the emperor did not indeed expel ; but he commanded such of them as adhered to the vital principles of their laws not to assemble, and dissolved the societies which returned under *Caius*.”

In this paragraph it is observable, that the historian divides the Jewish people into two classes ; one, which retained the vital prin-

\* Τους τε Ιουδαιους, πλεονασαντας αυθις, ωστε χαλεπως αν ανευ ταραχης υπο του οχλου σφων της πολεος ειρχθηναι, ουκ εξηλασε μεν, τω δε δη πατριω νομω βιω χρωμενους εκελευσε μη συναθροιζεσθαι, τας τε ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ επαναχθεισας υπο του Γαιου διελυσε. Και ορων μηδεν οφελος ον, απαγορευεσθαι τινα τω πληθει μη ποιειν, αν μη και ο καθ' ημεραν βιος μεταρ'υθμισθη, τα τε καπηλεια, εις α συνιοντες επινον, κατελυσε, και προσεταξε μητε κρεας που εφθον μηθ' υδωρ θερμον πιπρασκεσθαι, και τινας μη πειθαρχησαντας εκολασεν. Lib. lx. p. 669.



ciple of the Mosaic laws, by which probably are meant the rite of circumcision, and such other external ceremonies ; the other, which formed themselves into *societies*.

Now it is maintained, that by this last class the author meant those *Jews* and *Egyptians*, who in the time of Tiberius became converts to Christianity. In proof of this assertion, one instance, as it is very peculiar, will be sufficient. Pliny the younger, in his celebrated Epistle to the emperor Trajan, thus writes concerning the disciples of Jesus : “ After these things had been performed, their custom was to separate, and meet again at the time of meal, which consisted of plain and harmless food ; and from this very custom they abstained, after my edict, in which, agreeably to your orders, I prohibited their *societies*.”

The word which Pliny here uses, to denote the societies of Christians, is *ἑταίρειαι*, the very term employed by Dion the historian ; and what renders the use of it on this occasion very remarkable, and my assertion incontrovertible, is the circumstance, that Pliny

wrote in *Latin*. Hence it is plain, that the term was not casually applied on this particular occasion to the Christian assemblies, but chosen as the name which for some time had been appropriated to the societies of believers. Hence, too, we perceive,

1. That the Jews and Egyptians expelled from Italy by Tiberius were *converts* to the new faith. For if, as Dion attests, those converts *returned* (or, as the clause might more properly be rendered, as *they restored themselves* under Caligula) they must have been banished in the *preceding* reign; that is, in the reign of Tiberius.

2. From what we have already seen we may collect the time when those societies returned into Italy from Egypt. It was probably soon after the accession of Caligula, when the whole world enjoyed the blessings of peace and liberty.

3. We see the means by which the term *Hetæriæ* \* became at first applied to the fol-

\* A passage in *Athenæus* will place the meaning of this term in an obvious point of view: "Περὶ δὲ τῶν Κρητικῶν συσ-

lowers of Jesus. In its original import it signifies assemblies of people met together to

σιτιων Δωσιαδας ιστορων εν τη τεταρτη των Κρητικων ούτως γράφει. Οί δε Λυκτιοι συναγουσι μεν τα κοινα συσσιτια ούτως. Ἐκαστος των γινομενων καρπων αναφέρει την δεκάτην εις την ἙΤΑΙΠΕΙΑΝ, και τας της πόλεως προσόδους, ἃς διανεμουσι εἰ προσεσθηκοτες της πόλεως εις τους ἑκαστων οἰκους· των δε δουλων ἕκαστος Λιγιναιον φερεῖ στατήρα κατὰ κεφαλὴν διηρηγται δ' οἱ πολιται παντες εις ἙΤΑΙΠΕΙΑΣ." *De Cretensium syssitiis (conviviis) Dosiaaas libro quarto Cretensium ad hunc modum scribit : Lyctii vero sic ad communes SODALITATES cogunt. Contubernaliū quisque ex fructibus prædiorum decimam partem confert in eam sodalitatē, ac insuper redditum perceptum ex publicis vectigalibus civitatis, quæ ab urbis præfectis in singulas familias dispertiuntur. Servi autem in singula capita staterem Æginensem pendunt. In SOCIETATES civitas universa dividitur.*" *Atibenæus, p. 143.*

The following is a striking instance of the term Ἑταιρεία being applied to the Egyptian devotees. The author is speaking of Flaccus, appointed by Tiberius governor of Egypt.—“Ἐδικάζε τα μεγαλα μετα των εν τελει, τους ὑπεραχθους καθήρει, μιγαδων και συγκλυδων ανθρωπων οχλον εκωλυει επισυνιστασθαι τας τε ἙΤΑΙΠΕΙΑΣ και συνοδους, αἱ αει επι προφασει θύσιων εἰστιωντο, τοις πραγμασιν εμπαιρουσαι, διελυε, τοις αφηνιαζουσιν εμῆριθως και ευτόνως προσφερομενος. *Graviores causas judicabat, cum optimatibus, superbos deprimebat, vetabat cætus promiscuos multitudinis: sublatis etiam SODALITIIS, quæ prætextu sacrorum vacabant mero et crapulæ; contumacibus severus ac rigidus.*" *Philo in Flaccum, p. 966.*

Here we may discern the true character of the men that frequented the Egyptian assemblies. They were, it appears, mixed multitudes of people who came together under pre-

celebrate a feast. On this account it is often applied to the Egyptians, noted for the *festivities* which they held in honour of *Isis* and *Osiris*. Hence, when they became converts to the new religion, as they still continued their fondness for entertainments, though the object of their devotion was changed, it was natural for them to retain also that denomination, which in this respect was expressive of their peculiar character.

4. Hence is disclosed the origin of those banquets frequented by the early Christians, under the title of *agapæ*, or *love-feasts*. The devotees of *Isis*, as has just been observed, were noted for their devotion to festivals, which they celebrated very frequently, and with great pomp and luxury. The disciples of *Jesus* too had a simple institution, which they frequented in commemoration of their master ; and it is written of them, before they were yet debased by foreign luxury,

tence of engaging in the offices of religion, but in reality to feast and to drink, till their noise and commotion resembled the troubled waves of the sea. Flaccus, while he was yet a friend to virtue and order, found it necessary to dissolve such disgraceful societies.



that "they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." But the Egyptians, on receiving the faith, taught, as it must as yet have been, by men who neither understood its doctrines nor had imbibed its spirit, carried with them, we may well suppose, into the Christian church most of their former customs and habits. And among these were the feasts, to which they were so fondly devoted, and which offered an easy coalition with the institution of the Lord's Supper. From this unhappy union, which was unavoidable in such circumstances, the plain and simple Supper of our Lord degenerated into a riotous banquet, which did not at first, as *Mr. Hallett* thinks, form an institution distinct from the eucharist, but was the eucharist corrupted by Egyptian luxury.

5. These considerations unfold the true foundation of those calumnies which were published against the primitive Christians by their enemies. The Egyptian festivals, which were holden in the night, usually ended in riot and intemperance, and were often disgraced by

acts of adultery, robbery, incest, and murder. Of these enormities the Egyptian converts, where they did not bring the guilt, brought the imputation into the innocent bosom of the Christian church; and as it was natural in the Romans to form their notion of the assemblies of Christians in other parts of the empire from those in the capital, they necessarily concluded that they were all guilty of the same atrocious practices.

In order to convince my reader of the justice of this conclusion, I shall here compare a fact which Josephus has related of the priests of Isis in Rome, with a charge which *Cacilius* ascribes, in his dispute with *Octavius*, to all the followers of Jesus.

“*Ida*,” says Josephus, “perceiving that *Paulina* was much devoted to the worship of Isis, planned this scheme (in order that *Mundus*, her young master, might obtain her): she goes to some of the priests, and discloses to them the passion of her master; and by her entreaties, though principally by her presents (having at the time given them two thousand five hundred drachmæ, together with the

promise of an equal sum when the scheme should succeed), prevails upon them to use all their endeavours to procure him the beloved woman. Captivated with sums of gold, they pledged their service. The oldest of them repairs to the house of Paulina, and obtained of her a private interview. He came, he said, from the god Anubis, who was enamoured with her beauty. The information gave her pleasure. By the assistance of her associates she adorned herself in a stile worthy the honour done her by Anubis; and accordingly went to the holy place. When the *feast* was now over, the time for repose arrived, the doors of the temple were fastened, and the candles removed: then Mundus, who had there concealed himself, obtained the enjoyment which he wished."

Hear next the words of Cæcilius, accusing the Christians: " Their love-feasts are notorious, and every where the subject of common talk. People of every age and sex, accompanied with all their children, sisters, mothers, meet, on a festival day, at a common entertainment; where, after they are

much heated by festivity, and the fervour of incestuous desires is inflamed by intoxication, a dog, which is fastened to a candlestick, is instigated to leap after a cake thrown beyond the extent of the cord by which he is fastened, and thus the candle goes out, as if conscious of the meditated crime. They then roll in promiscuous indulgences, which the darkness itself feels, though it is not ashamed of the impurity ; and thus they are all equally incestuous, if not in fact, yet in their hearts : for the gratification which is obtained only by some, is coveted by them all \*."

Here it is said that the enormities imputed to the Christians were practised in their *love-feasts*, which I have already shewn to have been imported into the church of Christ by Egyptian debauchery ; and it appears to me very probable that this is the feast mentioned by Josephus in the above paragraph ; since it

\* This same calumny is taken notice of by Tertullian in these words : " Dicimur sceleratissimi de sacramento infantidii, et pabulo inde ; et post convivium incesto, quod ever-sores luminum canes, lenones scilicet, tenebrarum in verecundia procurent." *Apolog.* cap. vii.



will presently appear that Paulina, and the priests of Isis, who were the guilty instruments of her seduction, were at this very time nominal converts to the pure religion of Jesus, and the very men who first disgraced it by their conduct, and corrupted it by false philosophy and superstition.

Josephus says, that Paulina, after the feast was over, and the candles put out, gratified Mundus, imagining him to be *Anubis*, whom the Egyptians worshipped in the shape of a *dog*; and this circumstance will account for the malignant fiction alleged by Cæcilius and others: "After they are heated by festivity, and the fervour of incestuous desires is inflamed by intoxication, a *dog*, fastened to a candlestick, is instigated to leap after a cake thrown beyond the extent of the cord by which he is fastened; and thus the light goes out, as if conscious of the meditated crime."

These and other accusations, alleged against the disciples of Jesus, are repelled by the fathers with great vigour and animation. They boldly appeal to facts, and demand of the magistrate an inquiry into their conduct,

instead of resting on popular report ; and that if any of them, after a fair investigation, should be found guilty of such crimes, they should be punished as *criminals*, and not for being *Christians* : and it may here be observed, that the exemplary conduct and extraordinary virtue of those that were Christians indeed extorted a confession of their innocence from a person distinguished as much by his persecution of the Christians, as he was by learning and refinement ; I mean Pliny the younger.

In his well-known letter to Trajan he speaks thus : “ Soliti ante lucem, stato die, convenire, carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem ; seque sacramento, NON IN \* SCELUS ALIQUOD, OBSTRINGERE ; SED

\* The term *scelus* is here used by *Pliny* to signify, as is usually done by pure writers, that species of guilt which is incurred by *assassination* or *murder*. In this sense it is applied by *Horace*, in reference to the death of *Cæsar* :

Cui dabit partes *scelus* expiandi

Jupiter ?

Lib. i. Od. 2.

This too is the sense of it in the following lines of *Virgil* :

—— Sed regna Tyri germanus habebat

Pygmalion, *scelere* ante alios immanior omnes....

Ipsa sed in somnis inhumati venit imago

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Conjugis, ora modis attollens pallida miris :  
Crudeles aras, trajectaque pectora ferro,  
Nudavit ; cæcumque domûs *scelus* omne rexit.

Æn. lib. i. 350—360.

It denotes too the particular crime of murder in these lines of *Lucretius* :

Denique avarities et honorum cæca cupido,  
Quæ miseros homines cogunt transcendere fines  
Juris ; et, interdum, socios *scelerum* atque ministros,  
Noctes atque dies niti præstante labore  
Ad summas emergere opes ; hæc volnera vitæ  
Non minimam partem mortis formidine aluntur.

Lib. iii. 59—64.

Again, the same poet speaks thus of *religion*, because it occasioned the death of *Iphianassa* :

Religio peperit *scelerosa* atque impia facta.

Lib. i. 83.

Seneca, in the passage above quoted, gives the term *scelus* the same specific signification : "Nulla, si illi credas, anima interit nec cessat quidem nisi tempore exiguo, dum in aliud corpus transfunditur. Viderimus per quas temporarias vices, et quando pererratis pluribus domiciliis in hominem revertatur : interim *sceleris* hominibus et parricidii metum fecit, cum possint in parentis animam inscii incurrere, et ferro morsuve violare, in quo cognatus aliquis spiritus hospitaretur." Epist. 108.

mit murder, theft, robbery, or adultery, as is reported to be the case in Rome and other places ; but, on the contrary, the object of their oath is to keep their faith, and to deliver up the trust reposed in them ; and, in general, to preserve themselves free from the crimes imputed to them."

I have only to observe on this head, that a direct opposition is observable between *Suetonius*, who asserts, and *Dion*, who denies, that Claudius banished the Jews from Rome. The two writers, however, may easily be reconciled. That emperor ordered the Jewish people not to hold any more assemblies : rather than obey such an order, they chose to quit the city. The prohibition, therefore, amounted in effect to an expulsion. Suetonius considered it in this light ; and as he transiently touched upon the subject, he expressed it so. But Dion was more particular, and his particularity enabled him to be more accurate.

It is indeed asserted by Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, that all the Jews were expelled from Rome by Claudius ; but this tes-



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timony admits of the same explanation with the assertion of the Roman historian. At the same time I cannot here help expressing my suspicion, that the sacred writer used the term *Cæsar*, meaning *Tiberius*, and that ancient fraud changed this for *Claudius*. This, I confess, is a mere conjecture ; but I maintain, that it is nevertheless a conjecture which must appear very probable, when all the artifices, employed by the fathers to conceal the expulsion of the Christians by Tiberius, are brought to light.

The next writer who demands our attention is the celebrated *Plutarch*, whom learned men suppose to have been ignorant of Christianity, and its founders ; as they cannot perceive any allusion to either in his voluminous works. It will, however, be seen in the sequel, that they are much mistaken in this respect.

In the obscure book which he has written *concerning the cessation of the heathen oracles*, he speaks to this effect : “ After Ammonius had finished, I said to Cleombrotus, ‘ But do you speak to us respecting the *oracles* ; for

the glory of their divinity, in former days so celebrated, seems now to fade?' While Cleombrotus continued silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground, Demetrius said, 'It is not so necessary to inquire about the obscurity of those oracles, since we see them all, excepting in one or two instances, fallen away, but rather to consider the reason of their decay; for by what other name can I call their cessation? For, even from Bœotia, which was formerly so famous for its divinations, they have glided away like the stream, and left the country to labour under a great dearth, without any inspiration to cherish it.'

To this passage I call the attention of the reader, as it contains an acknowledgment that those oracles, which were so renowned among the pagans, had in the time of Plutarch become *extinct*. Their defection too is thus attested by Juvenal:

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Quidquid  
Dixerit astrologus, credent a fonte relatum  
Ammonis: quoniam Delphis oracula cessant,  
Et genus humanum damnat caligo futuri\*.

\* Sat. vi. 552—555.



Yet the Chaldæans are the first in fame ;  
 Their tales, as if from Hammon's fount they came,  
 Seem Heaven's high voice ; *since Delphos, grown unkind,*  
*Left us in darkness, to the future blind.*

Now the question is, what could have been the cause of the remarkable fact here attested ? The heathen oracles were regarded with high esteem by almost every description of men in the heathen world. The populace were taught to repose the most implicit credit on them ; and even the philosophers in general, though they might not believe, yet enforced their divine inspiration merely as a convenient instrument in governing the multitude. These oracles, moreover, were authorised by the laws, which threatened any reproach or neglect of them with the severest punishment ; and they had, finally, in their favour the high sanctions of universal custom and antiquity. With all these advantages on their side, what cause could have been powerful enough to effect their extinction ? In reply to this question, I shall lay down to be proved the three following propositions :

I. *The oracles in vogue among the pagans were for the most part put an end to by the*

*religion of Christ; which, after the resurrection of its founder, obtained the most rapid prevalence in the world.*

II. *Plutarch composed his famous book, concerning their cessation, in opposition to the Christian teachers, who urged the expulsion of the dæmons, as a proof of the divine authority and mission of Jesus.*

III. *From this very book it appears, that the Gospel was introduced into, and preached in Rome, under Tiberius, and embraced in name by the priests of Isis, and other magicians in his court; and that these men were the first who taught the divinity of its founder; representing him, in conformity to the Egyptian philosophy, as a GOOD DÆMON, who came from Heaven for the service of mankind.*

Before I proceed to the proof of these propositions, it is necessary, for the sake of perspicuity, to premise an observation, worthy of notice. It is the following: that the oracles in repute among the Gentiles were the supposed inspirations of dæmons, or the departed spirits of dead men, raised by super-

stition and idolatry to the rank of *Gods*. This is a fact well known and allowed by all competent judges ; it does not therefore need any corroboration. In inquiring then into the causes which occasioned the defection of the heathen oracles, we are to inquire, *What proved the means of exposing their falsehood, and of bringing the dæmons that inspired, and the priests that delivered them, into disgrace? What were the causes which effected the expulsion of those dæmons from the world?* or, in more accurate and philosophical language, *what happy means did there exist of removing, in a great degree, from among mankind, the disorders, the vices, and superstitious notions, which were usually ascribed to the instigation of evil dæmons?*

I. In answer then to these questions, it is maintained, that *these causes originated with the religion of Jesus Christ, which after his resurrection obtained the most rapid prevalence in the world, and produced the most beneficial effects on the tempers and conduct of its votaries.* The cessation of the heathen oracles, or the expulsion of the dæmons, it occasioned,

1. *Because its advocates, in their endeavours to propagate it among the Pagans, exposed the vanity and falsehood of the oracles, which they had hitherto been accustomed to look up to as true and divine.* An instance or two of this I will here produce for the satisfaction of the reader.

“ Eusebius has treated the subject in his *Præparatio Evangelica*, lib. iv, v, vi. He produces such arguments as tend to shew that it was all human fraud, and, amongst other things, he informs us, that many Pagan priests and prophets, who had been taken up and tried, and tortured, had confessed, that the oracles were impostures, and had laid open the whole contrivance, and that their confessions stood upon record, and that these were not obscure wretches, but philosophers, and magistrates, who had enriched themselves by persecuting and plundering the Christians. So Theodoret tells us, that, in demolishing the temples at Alexandria, the Christians found hollow statues fixed to the walls, into which the priests used to enter, and thence deliver oracles. v. 22. Eusebius adds,



that the Peripatetics, Cynics, and Epicureans were of opinion, that such predictions were all artifice and knavery. He then produces the arguments of Diogenianus against divination. But Eusebius, as also all the ancient Christians, was of opinion, that with these human frauds there might have been sometimes a mixture of dæmoniacal tricks. Pr. Ev. vii. 16. He then argues against the oracles from the concessions and the writings of Pagans. He shews from Porphyry, that, according to that philosopher's own principles, and according to the reasonings of other Pagans, the gods who delivered oracles must have been evil dæmons. He proves the same thing from human sacrifices, and produces Porphyry's testimony and opinion that the Pagans worshipped evil dæmons, the chief of whom were Serapis and Hecate. He proves the same from Plutarch; and he gives a collection, made by Cœnomaüs, of wicked, false, trifling, ambiguous oracles." *For. Remarks*, vol. i. p. 144, 145.

What is thus done by Eusebius in his *Evangelical Preparation* had doubtless been

done before him by the teachers of the Gospel, previously to the days of Plutarch and Porphyry.

A fine specimen of the manner in which the heathen oracles were exposed by the followers of Jesus is recorded by *Minutius Felix*, as a part of the reply made by *Octavius* to the Pagan *Cæcilius*.

After this last had asserted that the Romans owed their prosperity and successes to the attention which they paid to their oracles, the other answers him thus : “ Was not Regulus taken prisoner, though he consulted and conformed to the oracles ? Mancinus paid them the same superstitious regard, and yet he was taken and sent into captivity. Paulus obeyed the auspices of those chickens which he kept by him at Cannæ ; nevertheless he and the greater part of the Roman army were prostrated on the ground. Caius Cæsar despised the augurs, who advised him not to send his fleet to Africa before the winter should be over ; and did not success amply justify his contempt of them ? But need I say any more of these oracles ? Am-

phiaräus predicted things that happened after his death ; and yet this very man was unable to foresee that his wife would betray him for the sake of a necklace ! Tiresias, who was blind to things present, had notwithstanding eyes to see what were yet to come ! Ennius forged an oracle concerning Pyrrhus, which he ascribed to the Pythian Apollo, when Apollo had now ceased to utter verses ; whose dark and ambiguous responses began to fail as soon as men began to be more civilised and less credulous \*."

2. The early teachers of Christianity contributed to the extinction of the heathen oracles, by holding up the dæmons, who were the authors of those oracles, as the cause of all the vices which corrupted, and of all the superstitious notions which debased, those under their influence.

The following paragraph is taken from *Justin Martyr*, who addressed his Apology to the emperor and senate of Rome.

" Why then should you deal so severely

\* *Octavius*, p. 238.

with us, who injure no man, nor profess sentiments impious like these? You do not inquire with impartiality, and your decisions are dictated, not by wisdom, but by absurd prejudice, which is generated in you *by evil dæmons*. For, these dæmons, since their first appearance in the world, have continued to debauch women, to corrupt children, and to alarm mankind by terrific visions. Hence, those who cannot form a right judgment of such things, and are ignorant that they are the effects of evil spirits, worship them as *gods*, and distinguish them by their assumed names. But when Socrates endeavoured, by a rational inquiry, to bring the matter to light, and rescue mankind from subjection to the dæmons, these dæmons, by means of men delighting in wickedness, effected his murder as an enemy of the gods, and the introducer of new dæmons. The same thing they effect in respect to us. For not only among the Greeks were those crimes exposed by the wisdom of Socrates, but also among the barbarians by the *wisdom of God*, which became man, and is called *Jesus Christ*: in whom we having trusted, affirm, that the dæmons



which do these things are not good but evil, and hate all such as love virtue \*."

The next passage is taken from *Tertullian*. "The object of all that the dæmons do, is the destruction of man. They therefore inflict upon the body certain pains and disorders, and infuse into the soul sudden, violent, and unusual emotions. The subtilty of their nature enables them to operate both upon the corporeal and immaterial part of man; and while they preserve themselves invisible in their operations, they are apparent in their effects. As when the air, impregnated with latent contagion, and diffusing its pestilential breath, shakes to the ground the fruit in its blossom, or withers it in the bud, or tears it in its maturity; so, with the same invisible infection the blasts of the dæmons agitate the minds which they have seized with furious phrensy, squalid madness, flagrant lusts, and various errors; the worst consequence of which is, that they recommend themselves as gods to the minds of men entangled in their snares, in order that they

\* Justin Mar. i. Apol. p. 910. Ox. Ed.

may glut on the incense and blood of the victims offered to their images. They are the source of every evil to man, and never the authors of good. They pry into the future schemes of providence, and collect them from those predictions which were formerly delivered to, and are now read by men. Hence they anticipate a certain order of events, and rival the very divinity whose inspiration they have stolen: but with what address their oracles are adjusted, how ambiguous and how fallacious, all those that trust in them know from experience \*."

Now in these, and those other passages upon the subject, which are to be met with in the fathers, it is observable, that the bad passions and vices of men are ascribed to the operation of dæmons; and, in the first of these passages, the author speaks of those dæmons as having *themselves* committed the crimes of which, literally †

\* Tertul. Apolog. cap. xxii.

† I cannot help quoting here a just and important remark of the learned *Farmer*. "It hath been observed already, that the dæmons within them were supposed to occupy the seat of the human soul, and to perform all its functions in the body.

speaking, the persons supposed to be under their influence, were guilty. In this respect Justin, and others after him, used a language highly figurative, and had two reasons for the practice—1. That they might expose the evil dispositions and practices of unbelievers, without offending and exasperating them, at least in that degree which would have been the

During his possession the dæmoniac himself was silent; it was the dæmon alone that spoke in him. Whatever was done by the former was attributed to the impulse of the latter. Dæmoniacs were not only regarded by others, but generally conceived of themselves, as speaking and acting under the influence of the spirits by which they believed themselves possessed, or as being those very spirits. At least every thing they said and did corresponded to their apprehensions of the sentiments and inclinations of the in-dwelling dæmon, being themselves indeed (in their own imagination) nothing more than their organs of speech and action. Hence the dæmon and the dæmoniac were often, in common speech, confounded together, both were described under the same term, and the same act was referred indifferently to either." *Farmer on the Dæmoniacs*, p. 250.

Agreeably to this representation, when Justin Martyr and some others say, that the dæmons debauched women, and corrupted children, and the like, we are to understand that they mean only the *men*, who were guilty of those crimes, and who were impelled to them by the influence of the dæmons. Had *Middleton*, and some other modern critics, attended to this fact, they would not have ascribed to that father a "monstrous doctrine," which originated merely in their own misconception.

case, had *themselves*, and not the *dæmons*, been so accused.—2. That, by holding them up to the world as the primary cause of all wickedness, they might more effectually excite the hatred of mankind towards them, and hence liberate them from their supposed influence and authority. And it cannot well be doubted but that this artifice had a considerable effect in bringing those dæmons into general contempt, or, agreeably to the popular language, in banishing them from the world.

But whatever might have been the real opinion of the ancient Christians on this head, they were justified in ascribing the depravities of the human heart to the suggestion of dæmons, on the authority of some among the heathen philosophers. *Porphyry*, in his work *Concerning Abstinence from Animals*, speaks to this effect: “From these dæmons proceed every kind of intemperance, the desire of riches, ambition, and especially deception; for falsehood is essential to them \*.”

\* Πᾶσα γὰρ ἀκολασία, καὶ πλουτῶν ἐλπίς καὶ δοξῆς, ἐπὶ τούτων (δαίμωνων), καὶ μάλιστα ἀπατή· τὸ γὰρ ψεῦδος τοῦ τοῖς οἰκεῖον. *Porph.* lib. ii. fol. 23.



It was in conformity to this notion, which prevailed in Judæa, as well as in other places, that our Lord described the generation of bad habits, under an allusion to the commonly received doctrine of the body being possessed by an *evil spirit*. One instance I shall here produce. “When the unclean spirit is gone out from the man, it passeth through dry places in search of refreshment; but doth not find it: then it saith, I will return to my house whence I came out; and on its coming findeth the house ready for its reception, swept, and set in order. Then it goeth, and taketh with it seven other spirits, more wicked than itself: and they go in and dwell

This last clause leads me to explain a misinterpreted verse in John, chap. viii. 44.—“Ὅταν λαλῇ τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ ὅτι ψευστῆς, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ.” Which may be rendered thus—“*When any liar speaketh, he speaketh of his own; for not only he but his father too is a liar.*” If this version be right, τὸ ψεῦδος is the same, in signification, with τις ψευστῆς; and, instead of being the *accusative* case after λαλῇ, is the *nominative* before it. A striking instance of such an usage occurs in the following line of *Homer*.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ ψευδέσσι πατὴρ Ζεὺς ἐσσεῖ ἀρωγός.

Il. iv. 235.

Νοῦς ἐστὶ, says the Scholium, οὐδὲ γὰρ βοηθήσει ὁ Ζεὺς τοῖς ψευσταῖς—and Eustathius, ἐκ ἐστὶ βοηθὸς τοῖς ψευσταῖς Τρῶσιν.

there, and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. So will it be also to this wicked generation." *Matthew*, xii. 43.

"The comparison of the evil spirit," says Mr. Wakefield, "in this, and the two next verses, is wholly accommodated to the notions entertained by the Jews of those times, concerning dæmoniacal possessions; and is here employed by our Lord, in connection with a series of arguments, which had originated from the objections made by the Pharisees to his ejection of a dæmon. The general purport seems to be this :

"This wicked generation, by a persevering resistance to the truth, and an obstinate inattention to every opportunity of improvement, will advance by *rapid* steps from one degree of wickedness to another, and at length fill up the measure of their iniquities \*."

I proceed to observe,

\* *Commentary on Matthew, in loc.*

3. That, as the Christian religion, in early times, was instrumental in reforming the vices of mankind, so, according to the vulgar language, it was instrumental in expelling the dæmons which produced them.

The early Christian writers, in various parts of their productions, insist on the happy effect of their doctrine on the lives of its professors : nor is there a topic on which they are so eloquent and animating as when they describe the mighty power of the Gospel in reforming the world,

Hear the words of an author, whose honeyed flow of language procured him the appellation of the *Christian Cicero*. “ The mighty energy of the divine precepts on the minds of men is demonstrated by daily experience. Give me a man that is irascible, reproachful, or impetuous, and, by a few words of God, I will restore him, mild as a lamb. Give me a man that is covetous, and tenacious of his property, and I will give him back to you liberal, and distributing his money with full hands. Give me a man fearful

of pain and of death, and he will despise crucifixions, and flames, and torture \*. Give me a man that is lustful, an adulterer, or a gambler, and you will presently see him sober, chaste, and moderate. Give me a man that is cruel and thirsty for blood, and his fury will soon be changed into real clemency. Give me a man that is unjust, foolish, or an offender, and immediately he will become equitable, prudent, and inoffensive. For by a single baptism all his wickedness will be washed away †."

But lest it should be suspected that there is more rhetoric than truth in this paragraph, I will here cite the language of a man whose testimony cannot well be resisted or called in question.

"They entitle themselves," says he, "*physicians*, and they are physicians indeed ! since

\* For *taurum*, which is the original, I have taken the liberty to substitute *tormentum*, which I conceive to be the right reading, as it is in the subsequent chapter.

† *Lactantius*, lib. iii. c. 26. See Origen against Celsus.  
 " Ἀλλὰ καὶ μέχρι τοῦ θανάτου ἡ Ἰησοῦς δύναμις ἐστὶν ἐνεργεῖσα τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν καὶ βελτιώσιν ἐν τοῖς πιστεύουσι δι' αὐτὴν τῷ Θεῷ."  
 Ed. Spenc. p. 33.



they proclaim an art of healing superior to that which is found in the world: for the latter heals merely bodies, but the former cures even *souls*, after they have been seized by disorders fierce and scarcely remediable; souls, which have been occupied by lusts and depraved indulgences, by sorrows and fears; by tenacious avarice, childish follies, and iniquitous frauds, and by an innumerable multitude of other vices and bad passions \*."

\* Ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις τῶν φιλοσόφων εὐθὺς ἐμφαίνεται διὰ τῆς προσήσεως· θεραπεύται γὰρ καὶ θεραπευτίδες καλοῦνται· ἦτοι παρ' ὅσον ἰατρικὴν ἐπαγγέλλονται κρείσσονα τῆς κατὰ πόλεις; ἡ μὲν γὰρ σώματα θεραπεύει μόνον, ἐκείνη δὲ καὶ ψυχὰς νοσοῖς κεκρατημένας χαλεπαῖς καὶ δυσιατοῖς, αἷς κατεσκηψάν ἡδοναῖς καὶ ἐπιθυμίαις, λυπαῖς καὶ φόβοις, πλεονεξίαις τε καὶ ἀφροσύναις, καὶ ἀδικίαις, καὶ τοῖς τῶν ἀλλῶν παθῶν, καὶ κακίᾳ ἀνγνυτοῦ πλήθος.  
*De Vit. Contem. in Initio*, vol. ii. p. 471. Ed. Man.

This passage of Philo will justify the following paragraph written by Eusebius, which I shall give in the Latin version of *Vigerus*. This, and indeed the whole beautiful chapter, whence it is taken, are deserving of particular attention. "Ut primum religiosissima pacisque amantissima servatoris nostri doctrina increpuit, non ille tantum error, qui Deorum multitudinem invehebat, funditus tolleretur; verum etiam importatæ per ista populorum dissidia calamitates subito con- quiescerent. Equidem id vel maximum arbitror divinæ ar- canæque servatoris nostri potestatis argumentum. Illius au- tem utilitatis, quæ palam doctrinæ hujus prædicationem con- secuta est, cuivis rem secum attente reputanti clarum hoc

They are the words of Philo in defence of the converts in Egypt—Philo, supposed to this day to have been a *Jew*, but, in reality, the first and greatest advocate (the twelve apostles excepted) for the Christian system that ever shone upon the face of the globe.

in primis et illustre specimen intueri liceat; quod nec alias unquam ex omni hominum memoriâ, nec ab eorum ullo, qui famâ quondam nominis et existimatione floruerunt: sed tantum ex quo ipsius doctrinæ per universum orbem diffusæ verbis et concionibus hominum aures afflari cœpere, continuo factum sit, ut qui ferini prius ac barbari nationum omnium mores fuerant, iidem lenioribus et humanioribus institutis mansuescerent. Itaque nec Persæ, qui semel ejus disciplinæ nomen dederunt, nuptias amplius cum matribus iniecit: nec Scythæ, quod in eorum quoque regionem Christi sermo penetravit, humanâ jam carne pascuntur; nec alia barbarorum genera incesto filiarum ac sororum concubitu polluuntur: nec ad mares furioso libidinis æstu mares ipsi rapiuntur, nec cæteras, quæ naturæ leges violant, corporis voluptates persequuntur: nec canibus atque volucris necessariorum ac propinquorum suorum cadavera, quibus id quondam in more fuerat, obijciunt: nec senio jam confectis, ut antea, laqueos injiciunt, nec sibi amicissimorum carne post obitum antiquo ritu saginantur: nec majorum instituto dæmonibus tanquam diis homines immolant, nec sibi carissimos jugulant falsâ pietatis opinione delusi.—Hæc, inquam, omnia superioribus illis temporibus grassabantur, nunc autem fieri omnino desiere, immani ac belluinâ tot malorum peste salutaris unius Evangelicæ legis viribus profligatâ." *Præparatio Evangelica*, lib. i. p. 11.

It is worthy of remark, that the bad habits and vices, which he represents as having *seized* and *occupied* the minds of men, carry an allusion to the vulgar notion of the body being *possessed* by the evil dæmons, which were supposed to be the cause of those vices, and which were afterwards dislodged by the Christian doctrine.

The preceding observations will, I conceive, develop the nature and design of the following miracle, which *Mark* has thus recorded: "And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs, and no man could bind him, no not with chains; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus

afar off, he came and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit! And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, My name is *Legion*; for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was nigh a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave; and the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand), and were choaked in the sea." *Mark*, chap. v.

Here, we see, it is asserted, that the dæmons, which were cast out of the man, were sent into the swine, and that these, in consequence, were driven headlong into, and drowned in, the sea. This, if expressed with philosophical accuracy, signifies, that the dis-



order which afflicted the man was, at the command of Jesus, transferred to the swine, and effected their destruction.

Now the real design of this seeming cruelty, which has occasioned so much perplexity to the friends, and so much triumph to the enemies of the Gospel, consists in the *symbolical nature* \* which it possesses in com-

\* “In a few words,” (says Jortin, in his *Remarks*, vol. ii. p. 16.) “the observation which I would offer is this. The miracles of Christ were prophecies at the same time: they were such miracles as in a particular manner suited his character; *they were significant emblems of his designs*, and figures aptly representing the benefits to be conferred by him on mankind; and they had in them, if we may so speak, a spiritual sense. So much may be urged in behalf of this interpretation of them as shall probably secure it from being ranked among those fanciful expositions which are generally slighted by wise men: for many cabalistical notions have made their appearance in this, as well as in other centuries and countries, which are even beneath censure or mention, and neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill.” Peruse the whole from page 16 to page 30. Though the author, in this part of his subject, justly claims the merit of originality, he is far from having exhausted it. The symbolical nature of the miracle in question has escaped his notice, though his explanation of many of them is successful and elegant. And here let me point out a circumstance which receives its explanation from the typical reference which this miracle of our Lord bore to the diffusion and effects of his Gospel in the

mon with almost all his other miracles. In the ejection then of the unclean spirits, their entrance into the swine (which, on account of their *filth* \*, are the most proper symbol of *moral impurity*), and, finally, in their rush-

world. The persons from whom he cast out the evil spirits, on this occasion, were, we are told, *two* in number; one representing the conversion and subsequent reformation of those among the Jews, the other of those among the Gentiles, that should receive his religion. Accordingly, *Matthew*, who wrote his Gospel for the Jews, whom it was necessary to apprise of the future progress and happy effects of Christianity among the Pagans as well as his own nation, mentions *both* of them; whereas *Mark* and *Luke*, who addressed their respective Gospels to the Gentile converts, notice only *one* of those dæmoniacs: for the latter did not cherish the narrow and unsocial prejudice, under which the former laboured, that the blessings of the Messiah's government were to be confined to themselves. It was therefore unnecessary in *Mark* and *Luke* to give any hint that such a prejudice was erroneous. Besides this, neither their feelings as Jews, nor impartiality as historians, would have permitted these writers to represent, under a strong emblematical incident, the Jewish people (who in every stage of their history were more pure than their idolatrous neighbours) as being equally chained down with the Gentiles, by the possession of bad habits and passions.

\* A *swine* and a *filthy creature* are almost synonymous in the classic languages. *Amica luto sus*, is an expression of *Horace*, to which the following line of *Virgil* is similar:

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non ore solutos  
*Immundi* meminere sues jactare maniplos.

ing into and disappearing in the sea, our Lord intended to *presignify*, and in sensible colours to delineate, the mighty power which his religion would possess in purifying mankind from those pollutions by which they were debased, and which ignorance and superstition usually ascribed to dæmoniacal influence. That the event corresponded with this representation is a fact, as we have already seen, in part, attested by the unequivocal faith of history.

Let infidelity then cease to cavil at this miracle of our Lord, since it displays a wisdom, and even a benevolence, equal to what characterises his other works.

4. The religion of Jesus contributed, according to the popular language, to expel the dæmons from the world, by exposing the absurd notions and counteracting the pernicious influence of the pagan worship; of which dæmons, good and evil, were the supposed objects.

That the Gospel proved the mean of abolishing the heathen system, is a fact which

even its enemies must allow ; it may therefore be unnecessary to produce any authorities in proof of it : yet I cannot help citing a passage or two for the satisfaction of the reader. On this subject Justin Martyr thus addresses the Romans : “ The ancients of every nation worshipped Bacchus the son of Semele, and Apollo the son of Latona, together with Æsculapius, who, to gratify their incestuous lusts, did things too base even to be named. They offered homage also to Proserpine and Venus, infuriated as they were with the love of Adonis, whose mysteries you too celebrate. But these, with all others called gods, we hold in contempt, though threatened with the punishment of death, consecrating ourselves to the eternal and incorruptible God ; and this we do by *Jesus Christ* \*.”

Eusebius, after citing the words of Isaiah, which our Lord applied to himself, as recorded by Luke (cap. iv. 17—19), writes to this effect : “ These divine oracles, preserved from of old among the Hebrews, pre-

\* Justin Mar. I. Apol. p. 49.



dicted the joyful news of our deliverance, though blind in mind, and held in complicated chains by evil dæmons. Having the eyes of our understanding hence adequately enlightened; having become sober-minded, reflecting, and rational, and rescued from every iniquity, we refuse to offer sacrifice, or act subserviently to those who 'are made gods by the decrees of the heathens, and who in former times had dominion over us likewise; but being conducted and introduced by the doctrine of our Saviour to the only true God, the sovereign and supporter, the preserver and benefactor, and also the framer and conductor of all things, him only we deem to be the true God; to him alone we ascribe due reverence; to him alone we cherish sentiments of veneration and piety; and that not in a way acceptable to the dæmons, but as we are taught by that joyful messenger sent down from heaven to be the Saviour of all mankind \*."

These and innumerable other passages of

\* *Evan. Præpar.* lib. iv. sect. xxi. p. 101. Step. Edit. or Veg. Edit. vol. i. p. 170.

the kind are sufficient to shew how instrumental and effectual the Christian doctrine proved in overthrowing the heathen system; and as it was the mean of abolishing the whole system of heathenism, it must necessarily have been the mean of abolishing the pagan oracles, which constitute a principal branch of it. Accordingly *Porphry*, though a bitter enemy of the Christians and their cause, makes the following concession: “ \* People wonder whether the disorder, which now for many years has disturbed the state, was occasioned by the departure of *Æsculapius* and all the other gods. For, since *Jesus* was held in veneration, none of the gods experienced any public act offered to their service.”

On this singular concession, *Eusebius*, from whom I have copied the above extract, premises this remark: “ That after the coming of our Saviour among men, the evil dæmons lost all their power and influence, as

\* Νυν δε θαυμαζουσιν, ει τοσoutων ετων κατειληφε την πολιν η νοσος, Ασκληπιου επιδημιας και των αλλων θεων μηκετι ουσης. Ιησου γαρ τιμωμενου ουδεμιας τις θεων δημοσιας ωφελειας ησθητο. *Evan. Præpar. lib. v. sect. i. p. 107.*

the advocate of those dæmons himself thus confesses in his book against us."

It is now time to proceed to my next proposition; which is to shew,

II. *That Plutarch wrote his book DE DEFECTU ORACULORUM, in order to invalidate the argument urged by the advocates of the Gospel, that the dæmons were expelled from the world, in consequence of its purifying influence.*

In order to prove this point, it is necessary to specify, by a few extracts, the causes to which that sophist ascribes the expulsion of the dæmons, and the consequent cessation of the oracles. The first position which he advances is, that those dæmons were the spirits of *dead men*, which did not receive the power of divination *after* their separation from, but possessed it while yet united with, the body, though indeed obscured and obstructed by its corruptibility and inertness. " \* If," says he, " as you agree with the divine *Hesiod*, in thinking that dæmons are souls either sepa-

\* Plut. Works, vol. ii. p. 431.

rated from the body, or that hold no intercourse with it, why should we suppose them, while yet in the body, to be destitute of that power, by which they are enabled, when become dæmons, to foresee and foretell things to come? For it is not probable, that any faculty, or any capability, should have been communicated to them, after their separation from the body, which they did not possess during their union with it. But though the soul possessed all her powers, she must, nevertheless, possess them very imperfectly during her incorporation; as some of her energies lie in that time invisible and enveloped: others, again, of them are feeble, and appear obscure, as if through a cloud or agitated water; while others, finally, are slow, and incapable of displaying themselves, and therefore demand the study and cultivation of the owner to improve them, and to remove those latent obstructions which prevent their growth. For the soul possesses the faculty of divination, even when entwined with the body, though she be blinded by means of her mixture with earth: just as the sun does not then become splendid, when he emerges from



behind the clouds, but shines, though intercepted from our view, with one uniform lustre."

The next position which the sophist lays down is, that as the soul, during her residence in the body, is endued with the principle of divination; so, after she is dissolved from it, and become a dæmon, she is occasionally inspired from the same causes as when she was united with it. And these causes are the effluvia of natural bodies, exhalations from the earth, certain degrees of cold and heat, evaporations, fountains of peculiar qualities, and the like.

"Since," adds he, "souls have this power implanted in them, though yet obscure, and difficult to be conceived, it frequently, nevertheless, blooms out into view in dreams, and at the performance of religious rites; either because the body then becomes pure, and receives a disposition congenial to divination; or because the rational and contemplative faculty relaxes and disengages itself from present objects, and leaves the mind to

be carried away by the impulse of those emotions which, though irrational, prognosticate future things. For he is not, as *Euripides* says, the best prophet who conjectures well, since such a person always follows the dictate of reason, and uniformly proceeds along the path of probability. But the prophetic power, like a writing-table, senseless, indefinite, and incapable of impressing itself, though susceptible of images and anticipations passively inscribed, attains, without the exercise of reason, the knowledge of futurity, and that chiefly when it is disengaged from present concerns. But that emotion, which we call *divine inspiration*, is excited by a certain temperature and disposition of the body; and this disposition the body of itself often acquires, though more frequently it be effected by the earth, which opens to mankind the sources of various other powers; some of which produce phrensy, disorders, and death; while others produce lenient, medicinal, and beneficent effects. But the stream and breath of divination, which flows hence, is the most pure and divine, whether it be imbibed with the air alone, or with the liquid water. For when this stream is mingled with the body

it generates a temperature \* which is unusual and foreign to the soul ; a temperature which may in various ways be conceived, though difficult to be expressed. For by its heat and expansion it opens certain pores, which convey images of things to come, just as wine, by rising in vapours to the brain, brings to light many emotions and sentiments which before lay concealed. For Bacchanalian fury and madness are accompanied with a high degree of inspiration ; since, according to *Euripides*, the soul, when warmed and heated by passion, rejects that studied caution which human prudence suggests, and

\* The principle to which this wretched sophist ascribes the power of divination in the mind is copied, perhaps, from the following lines of Virgil, where that noble writer, in a happy union of philosophy and poetry, describes the source of the same power in birds :

Haud equidem credo, quia sit divinitus illis  
 Ingenium, aut rerum fato prudentia major :  
 Verum, ubi tempestas et cœli mobilis humor  
 Mutavère vias ; et Jupiter humidus Austris  
 Densat, erant quæ rara modo, et, quæ densa relaxat ;  
 Vertuntur species animorum, et pectora motus  
 Nunc alios, alios, dum nubila ventus agebat,  
 Concipiunt : hinc ille avium concentus in agris,  
 Et lætæ pecudes, et ovantes gutture corvi.

Geor. I. 415, &c.

which extinguishes the kindling breath of the divinity. It may at the same time not be absurd to assert, that aridity, which is produced by heat, subtilises the air, and renders it more pure and ethereal: since, according to *Heraclitus*, the soul is destitute of moisture, which blunts the senses both of hearing and seeing; and, when it falls on a looking-glass, effaces the brightness of the image reflected by the air. On the other hand, it is not impossible but that the faculty of prognostication is generated and (just as iron by immersion) consolidated in the soul by means of frigidity and condensation. And as liquified tin contracts brass, and fills up the many pores which it contains, and, at the same time, renders it more bright and pure, so it is probable, that prophetic vapour, containing in it something appropriate and congenial to the mind, fills up its vacuities, and holds it together in harmony \*."

\* P. 432, 433. It is utterly impossible that Plutarch, endowed as he was with learning and talents, could have been weak enough to believe what he here advances to be *true*: he must therefore have *been wicked* enough to say what he knew to be *false*, for the sake, as will soon appear, of undermining the Christian cause. Indeed, a farther examination



Having ascribed the power of divination in souls and dæmons to exhalations and other similar causes, he leads his reader to conclude, that as these causes were variable, and liable, in certain circumstances, to cease, the

of this singular book, and of his other *philosophical* works, which are, almost without exception, a series of falsehoods, forgeries of superstitious notions, mixed with truths clandestinely stolen from the Christian system, will abundantly prove, that, however great were his abilities and his erudition, he possessed a temper the most fierce and illiberal, and a heart deeply depraved with superstition and guilt. Had we no other proof than this very dialogue, we should have sufficient reason to conclude that the author was far, very far, from deserving the encomium bestowed upon him by a writer, whose enmity against the religion of Jesus led him to extol all those who opposed it in ancient times. “The names of Seneca,” says he, “of the elder and the younger Pliny, of Tacitus, of Plutarch, of Galen, of the slave Epictetus, and of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, adorn the age in which they flourished, and exalt the dignity of human nature. They filled with glory their respective stations, either in active or contemplative life; their excellent understandings were improved by study; *philosophy had purified their minds from the prejudices of the popular superstition, and their days were spent in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue. Yet all these sages (it is no less an object of surprise than of concern) overlooked or rejected the perfection of the Christian system.* Their language or their silence equally discover their contempt for the growing sect, which in their time had diffused itself over the Roman empire.” *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. i. p. 616, chap. xv.

cessation of the oracles, or the departure of the daemons, must have followed of course.

“ All the powers,” says he, “ which surround the earth, though itself eternal and incorruptible, have sometimes their decay and generation ; and at other times they depart and disappear ; and after those revolutions, which are carried on in infinite time, return again to view, as we may learn from visible objects. For, many lakes and rivers, and tepid fountains, have, in certain places, been entirely dried up, while in others they glided away, or sunk out of sight \*.”

Thus much I thought it right, for the satisfaction of my reader, to translate from this curious book. A great deal more is said by the author ; but all his reasonings are of the same stamp, and too absurd and contemptible to recompense the pain of transcribing them. It remains then to shew, that, in advancing the above arguments, he had before his eyes the disciples of Jesus, who imputed the expulsion of the dæmons to the prevalence and

\* Page 433.

purifying influence of their faith. The following considerations will be sufficient to evince this important fact.

1. The almost total subversion of the pagan religion, and the implied subversion of the pagan oracles, which took place so early even as the time of Plutarch, was an effect so remarkable, so notorious, and an effect too which so obviously pointed to Christianity as its cause, that no person, however uninformed, much less such a writer as Plutarch was, possessed of every kind of knowledge and information, could have been ignorant of it.

2. As Plutarch must have known that the cessation of the heathen oracles was ascribed to the influence of the Gospel, it was natural in him, as possessing eminent abilities, and actuated by deep-rooted enmity towards it, on account of his attachment to the pagan system, to *oppose* its votaries, and endeavour to deprive them of so formidable an argument in favour of their faith, by assigning the banishment of the dæmons to some other cause.

3. The causes to which he imputes that event, and all his reasonings on the subject, are so grossly absurd, so destitute of truth, and even of speciousness, so replete with folly and nonsense, as to manifest that he was *pressed* by some powerful opponents, whom he could not encounter on the fair and open ground of argumentation ; whose force, therefore, he sought to evade and to frustrate by scholastic subtleties and metaphysical perplexities, which are not only improbable, but incomprehensible.

4. That Plutarch composed this book in opposition to the Christian teachers, is a fact fairly to be inferred from a passage in it, where he assails the disciples of Jesus with all the bitterness of reproach, and all the scoff of ridicule, for entertaining the notion which they did respecting the dæmons. The passage is put by him into the mouth of *Cleombrotus*, and is as follows : “ If it be fit to laugh in philosophy, we ought to laugh at those, who expect that bodies, which are mere idols, dumb, blind, and lifeless, should, after an indefinite revolution of years, reappear, and again be completely organized ; some of



those bodies being yet alive, others being long since burnt, or decomposed by putrefaction—These, I say, are the men to be derided, who introduce into philosophy such fantastic puerilities as these, but, nevertheless, bluster, if you insist before them, that the dæmons preserve for a long period not only their existence, but their faculties.”

The word in the original standing for *bodies* is *εἰδωλα* ; which, considering the design of the writer, was the most suitable that he could have chosen. This, I presume, will appear from the following reasons :

An *idol*, in the eye of Pagan philosophy, was nothing more than a *corporeal* representation of a spiritual being, or a visible symbol of a divinity that was itself invisible. To this divinity it bore the same analogy which a body, that is seen and felt, has to the mind, which is capable of neither. Hence, by a common figure of *speech*, the *body* may be styled the *idol* of the mind. For instance, because *Apis* formed the *body*, in which the *soul* of *Osiris* was supposed to reside, it was called *the idol of Osiris* : Εν δὲ Μεμφει τῆς

φεσθαι του Απιν ειδωλον οντα της εκεινου ψυχης,  
 ὅπου και σωμα κεισθαι. *Plutarch De Iside.*

But ειδωλον has frequently another signifi-  
 cation, exactly according with the sense here  
 given to it by Plutarch ; namely, something  
*transient* or *perishable*. For this reason, the  
 Egyptians, we are told by Herodotus, when  
 they assembled at a feast, handed round a  
 dead body, which they called ειδωλον τ'ανθρωπου  
 τεθνηκοτος, with this maxim, *Drink and be  
 merry, for soon you will be lifeless like this.*  
 Herod. lib. ii. cap. 78.

Sophocles, wishing to convey a strong idea  
 of the shortness and uncertainty of human  
 life, put these words in the mouth of Ulysses :

Ὅρω γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ὄντας ἄλλο πλὴν  
 Εἰδῶλα, ὅσοι περ ζῶμεν, ἢ κοῦφην σκίαν.

Accordingly the *Scholiast* on the place thus  
 explains the term : Εἰδῶλα τὰ φαινόμενα ἐν τῷ  
 αἵμα φαντάσματα, ἅπερ αἶμα τῷ φανῆναι ἀφανι-  
 ζονται, ἀστατά οὐτά και ἀβέβαια.

Taken in this acceptance, no word in the

language could have suited the purpose of Plutarch better, as it enabled him to express in the strongest manner the apparent absurdity of those men, who maintained that human bodies, now known to be perishable, and ever fluctuating, shall hereafter be rendered insusceptible of decay, and, though dissolved and scattered by death, again be restored to their former shape and configuration.

There is still another reason, which rendered the use of *ειδωλα* in this place peculiarly happy and forcible. The teachers of the Gospel, wherever they conveyed it, attacked with all the force of argument the senseless objects of heathen idolatry—*Ειδωλα*—says Justin, in his Epistle to Diognetus—*ου κουφα ; ου τυλφα ; ουκ αιψυχα και αναισθητα ;* Such words as these were always used by the Christian preachers in their attacks on the Pagan superstition, before and after the days of Plutarch ; and he doubtless felt their force. But too stubborn to be convinced, and too haughty to receive instruction, he lays hold of them ; and then, after connecting with them a notion, which to the eye of Gentile

philosophy appeared still more ridiculous and absurd, hurls them back at the head of his opponents. Without admitting the justness of this remark, it will be difficult to account for the very great similarity between the words of Plutarch, and those quoted above from Justin.

If then this criticism be just, it cannot be doubted but that the men here stigmatized were the disciples of Jesus : for they alone taught that the bodies of men were again to be organized and reunited with those souls \* which before inhabited them. This opinion, though founded upon a fact which claimed the testimony of the senses, was, nevertheless, treated by the unbelieving Gentiles, and even by many professed Christians, as absurd, vision-

\* The teachers of Christianity among the Gentiles seem, in general, to have adopted the popular doctrine, borrowed from the eastern philosophy, that the human soul, as being distinct from, would, on its separation by death, survive the body : but our Lord and his apostles appear, by inculcating the resurrection of the dead as the sole ground of a future existence, to have considered this as an idle notion, and to have adopted the more rational idea, that the powers of sensation, consciousness, and thought in man proceed from the internal organization of the body.



ary, and impossible ; and this, we see, is the contemptuous manner in which it is treated by this proud sophist.

“ They,” says he, “ are to be derided, who introduce into philosophy such fantastic puerilities as these, but who nevertheless bluster, if you insist before them, that the dæmons preserve for a long period not only their existence, but also their faculties.”

The sentiment concerning the dæmons, which is here reprobated, is implied in almost all that the early Christians have said of them ; since they maintain, that the influence and authority which they had hitherto exercised over mankind were destroyed by the coming of our Lord into the world, and that the dæmons themselves were expelled from among men by the power of the Gospel, and confined in Tartarus, or some cold and dreary climates, till they should receive from the judge of all the punishment due to their crimes.

It remains now to prove in the last place, that,

III. *From this very book it appears, that the Gospel was introduced into and preached in Rome in the reign of Tiberius, and embraced in name by the priests of Isis, and other magicians in his court; and that these men were the first who taught the divinity of its founder; representing him, in conformity to the Egyptian theology, as a good dæmon, who came from heaven for the service of mankind.*

That I may make good this interesting point, I must be permitted to take from this book a long but singular passage. It is as follows:—“ \* While Heracleon was thinking

\* Προς ταυτα τε Ἡρακλεωνος σιωπῇ διανοημενου τι προς αὐτον, Αλλα φανλους μεν (εφη) δαιμονας ουκ Εμπεδοκλῆς μονον, ω Ἡρακλεων, απελιπεν, αλλα και Πλατων και Ξενοκρατης και Χρυσιππος· ετι δε Δημοκριτος, ευχομενος ευλογχων ειδολων τυγχανειν, η δηλος ην ετερα δυστραπελα και μοχθηρας γινωσκων εχοντα προαιρεσεις τινας και ερμας. Περι δε θανατε των τειουτων ακηκα λογον ανδρος ουκ αφρονος ουδ' αλαζινος· Αιμιλιανη γαρ τε ρητορος, ου και υμων ενιοι διακηρασιν, Επιθεσης ην πατηρ, εμος πολιτης και διδασκαλος γραμματικων. Ουτος εφη· ποτε πλεων εις Ιταλιαν επιδῃναι νεως, εμπροκα χρηματα και συχνους επιδατας αγοουσης. Ἐσπερας δ' ηδη περι τας Εχινάδας νησους αποσδῃναι το πνευμα, και την ναυν διαφεριμενην πλησιον γενεσθαι Παξων· εγγηγορεναι δε τους πλειστους, πολλους δε και πινειν ετι δεδειπνηκοτας· εξαφνης δε φωνην απο της γησε των Παξων ακουσθῃναι, Θαμουν τινος βοη καλουντος, ωστε

on these things, *Philip* observed, that not only Empedocles, but also Plato, Xenocrates,

θαυμαζειν. Ὁ δὲ Θαμους Αἰγυπτίος ἦν κυβερνήτης, οὐδὲ τῶν ἐμπλεοντῶν γινώριμος πολλοῖς ἀπ' ὀνοματός· δις μὲν οὖν κληθέντα σιωπῆσαι, τὸ δὲ τρίτον ὑπακούσαι τῷ καλοῦντι· κακείνῳ ἐπιτείναντα τὴν φωνὴν εἶπεν, Ὅτι ὅταν γενῇ κατὰ τὸ Παλῳδες, ἀπαγγεῖλον, ὅτι Παν ὁ μέγας τέθνηκε. Τοῦτ' ἀκούσαντας, ὁ Ἐπιθέρης εἶφεν, πάντας ἐκπλαγῆναι, καὶ δίδοντας ἑαυτοῖς λόγον, εἴτε ποιῆσαι βέλτιον εἰς τὸ προστεταγμένον, εἴτε μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν, ἀλλ' ἐὰν οὕτως, γινῶναι τὸν Θαμουν, ἐὰν μὲν ἡ πνευμα, παρὰ πλεῖν ἡσυχίαν ἐχόντα, νηνεμίας δὲ καὶ γαλήνης περὶ τὸν τόπον γενομένης, ἀνείπειν ὁ ἤκουσεν· ὥς οὖν ἐγένετο κατὰ τὸ Παλῳδες, οὔτε πνεύματος ὄντος, οὔτε κλυδῶνος, ἐκ πρυμνῆς βλέποντα τὸν Θαμουν πρὸς τὴν γῆν εἶπεν, ὥσπερ ἤκουσεν, ὅτι ὁ μέγας Παν τέθνηκεν· Οὐ φθῆναι δὲ παυσάμενον αὐτὸν, καὶ γενεσθαι μέγαν οὐχ ἑνός, ἀλλὰ πολλῶν στεναγμον, αἶμα θαυμασμῷ μεμιγμένον· Οἷα δὲ πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων παρόντων, ταχὺ τὸν λόγον ἐν Ῥώμῃ σκεδασθῆναι· καὶ τὸν Θαμουν γενεσθαι μεταπεμπτὸν ὑπὸ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος· οὕτω δὲ πιστεῦσαι τῷ λόγῳ τὸν Τιβέριον, ὥστε διαπυθανεσθαι καὶ ζητεῖν περὶ τοῦ Πανος· εἰκαζειν δὲ τοὺς περὶ αὐτὸν φιλόλογους συχνούς οὐκ ὄντας, τὸν ἐξ Ἑρμοῦ καὶ Πηνελόπης γεγεννημένον. Ὁ μὲν οὖν Φίλιππος εἶχε καὶ τῶν παρόντων ἐνίους μαρτυράς, Αἰμιλιανὸς τὸ γέροντος ἀκηκοτάς.

Ὁ δὲ Δημήτριος εἶφεν, τῶν περὶ τὴν Βρεττανίαν νήσων εἶναι πολλὰς ἐρημούς· σποράδας, ὧν ἐνίας δαιμονῶν καὶ ἥρων ὀνομαζεσθαι· πλεῦσαι δ' αὐτοῖς ἱστορίας καὶ θεᾶς ἐνεκα, πομπῇ τοῦ βασιλέως, εἰς τὴν ἐγγίστα κειμένην τῶν ἐρημῶν, ἐχθσαν ἔτι πολλὰς ἐποικούντας, ἱεροὺς δὲ καὶ ἀσυνελεῖς πάντας ὑπὸ τῶν Βρεττανῶν ὄντας· ἀφικομένη δ' αὐτὴ νεώστι, συγχύσιν μεγάλην περὶ τὸν αἶρα καὶ διοσημίας πολλὰς γενεσθαι, καὶ πνεύματα καταρράγῃναι καὶ πέσειν πρὸς τῆρας· ἐπεὶ δ' ἐλωφῆσε, λέγειν τοῖς νησιώταις, ὅτι τῶν κρείσσωνων τίνος ἐκλείψις γεγενῆσθαι· ὥς γὰρ λυχνός ἀναπτομένος, φαναι δεινὸν ὅθεν ἔχει, σθένειν μὲν πολλοῖς λυπῆρος ἐστίν, οὕτως αἱ μεγάλαί

and Crysippus, prove in their writings that the dæmons are evil. Democritus also, by praying that these dæmons might be auspicious to him, supposed that they were of a depraved disposition, and generate in men inclinations congenial to their own depravity.

ψυχαι τοις μεν αναλαμψεις ευμενεις και αλυπτες εχουσιν, αι δε σβεςεις αυτων και φθοραι πολλακις μεν, ως νυνι, πνευματα και ζαλας τρεφουσι, πολλακις δε λοιμικοις παθεσιν αερα φαρμακτουσιν. Εκει μεντοι μιαν ειναι νησον, εν η τον Κρονον κατειρχθαι φρουρουμενον υπο του Βριαρεω καθευδοντα, δεσμον γαρ αυτω τον υπνον μεμηχανησθαι, πολλους δε περι αυτον ειναι δαιμονας οπαδους και θεραποντας.

Ἵπολαβων δε ὁ Κλεομῆροτος· εχω μεν (εφη) και εγω τοι-  
αυτα διελθειν. Αρκει δε προς την ὑποθεσιν, το μηδεν εναντιουσθαι,  
μηδε κωλυειν εχειν οὕτως ταυτα· καιτοι Στωϊκοις (εφη) γινωσκο-  
μεν ου μονον κατα δαιμωνων ην λεγω δοξαν εχοντας, αλλα και  
θεων ουτων τοσούτων το πληθος, ἐνι χρωμενους αἰδιω και αφθαρ-  
τω· τους δ' αλλους και γεγονεναι και φθαρησεσθαι νομιζοντας.  
Επικουρειων δε χλευασμους και γελωτας ουτι φοβητεον, οἷς τολ-  
μωσι χρησθαι και κατα της προνοιας, μυθον αυτην αποκαλουν-  
τες. Ἡμεῖς δε την απειριαν μυθον ειναι φαμεν, εν κοσμοις τοσ-  
ουτοις, μηδενα λογω θειω κυβερνωμενον εχουσαν, αλλα παντας  
εκ ταυτοματου και γεγονотας και συνισταμενους. Εἰ δε χρη γε-  
λαν εν φιλοσοφια, τα ειδωλα γελαστεον τα κωφα και τυφλα και  
αψυχα, ποι μενουσιν απλετους ετων περιοδους επιφαινομενα, και  
περισσεντα παντη, τα μεν ετι ζωντων, τα δε παλαι κατακαεν-  
των, η και κατασαπεντων απορρυνεντα, φλεδοντας και σκιας ελκον-  
τες εις φυσιολογιαν· αν δε φη τις, ειναι δαιμονας ου φυσει μονον,  
αλλα και λογοις, και το σωζεσθαι και διαμμενειν πολυν χρονον  
εχοντας, δυσχολαινοντας. P. 419, 420.



But concerning the death of these evil spirits, I have received an account from a man, by no means destitute of wisdom and modesty, I mean *Æmilianus* the rhetorician, son of Epitherses, my fellow-citizen, and master in grammar. This person related, that a ship was once sailing for Italy, richly stored with merchandise, and also having many passengers on board. One evening, when this ship was near the Echinades, the wind subsided, and in consequence she was hauled towards the shore of the island Paxus. Many of the passengers were drinking after supper, but the greater part of them were watching; when on a sudden a voice was heard from the island, calling aloud for THAUMAS, which filled them with wonder. This Thaumias was an Egyptian, and the pilot, and not known by name to many in the ship. Though called twice, he continued silent; but the third time he paid attention to the voice, which with great force commanded him thus: "WHEN YOU SHALL HAVE ARRIVED AT THE PALODES, SAY THAT THE GREAT PAN IS DEAD." On hearing this, Epitherses said, that they were all astonished, and reasoned with themselves whether or not it were

better to do what was ordered, or to leave it unnoticed. But Thaumas determined, that if there should be wind, he would pass by the Palodes in silence; but if it should prove calm in that place, he would announce what he had heard. Having arrived at the island, there was neither wind nor tide: Thaumas, therefore, placing himself at the stern, with his face to the land, announced, as he had heard, *that the great Pan was dead*. As soon as he had ended, immediately were groans uttered, mixed with astonishment, not of one, but of a multitude. And as there were many more present, the report of this was propagated throughout Rome; so that *Tiberius Cæsar* sent for Thaumas, and asked of him, Who this Pan was? and made inquiries concerning him. But the philologers, who were around the emperor in great numbers, represented this Pan to be the son of Mercury and Penelope. And Philip had many witnesses present, who heard these things from the aged Æmilianus.

“ And Demetrius said, that there were many islands dispersed around *Britain*, some of which were celebrated for the dæmons and

demi-gods abounding in them. There, at the command of the emperor, he sailed for the purpose of exploring the coasts. While he was lately in those islands, a great commotion and many strange appearances were seen in the air, accompanied with a violent wind and thunder. When the storm had ceased, the inhabitants told him that some superior being had been deprived of life : for as a candle when burning occasions no harm, but if extinguished proves offensive to many ; so superior spirits, when kindled with life, are inoffensive and beneficent ; but when deprived of animation they excite by their extinction hurricanes and tempests, and oftentimes poison the air with contagious disorders. In one of these islands Saturn lies enchained by Briareus, surrounded by many dæmons for his servants and attendants.

“ Then Cleombrotus, in reply, observed that he too had it in his power to detail such things, but he would not then enter into a discussion of them ; since, though admitted to be true, they were foreign to the subject. The Stoics, we know (continued he), entertain the same opinion with myself respecting

the dæmons; and though they admit a multiplicity of inferior gods, yet maintain one only to be eternal and incorruptible, and all the rest to be subject to renovation and decay. And as to the scoffs and reproaches of the Epicureans, we need not heed them, since they are so bare-faced as to ridicule even *Providence*, calling it a mere fable. But we may retort the charge of fable upon them, for asserting that there are worlds without number, and without end, and yet that these worlds are not regulated by a supreme wisdom, but have originated in, and are supported by, their own spontaneous impulse. But if it be fit to laugh in philosophy, we ought to laugh at those who expect that bodies, which are mere idols, &c. &c."

On this extract several observations are necessary to be made, in order to develope its meaning.

First, It is maintained with Eusebius, and the catholic writers who followed him, though opposed by Lardner, and other protestant divines, that the great Pan, of whose death Thaumias brought an account to Rome, is



no other than our Lord Jesus Christ. This will appear indisputable, for the following reasons :

This person is said to have died in the reign of Tiberius, when it is well known that our Saviour suffered ; and the appellation of PAN, which heathenism has applied to him, as signifying the *Lord of all* \*, answers to the notion cherished by the Jews, and other Gentile nations, that the expected Messiah would be an universal prince, and to the description given of him in the New Testament, as being the person to whom all power in heaven and earth is given.

This account Philip received from *Æmilianus* the rhetorician. Now this *Æmilianus*, we are assured from Apuleius, as has been pointed out by *Warburton*, and allowed by Lardner, was a *believer* in Jesus. By the Pan, therefore, who died in the reign of Ti-

\* Thus Orpheus says of him :

Πανα καλῶ κρατερον γε θεον, κοσμοιο το συμπαν  
Ουρανον ἦδε θαλασσαν, ἦδε χθονα παμδασιλειαν,  
Και πυρ αθανατον ταδε γαρ μελη εστι του Πανος.

berius, he must have meant his divine master Jesus Christ, and he could not mean any other. Cleombrotus, who opposed, and Plutarch who has recorded this story, and all the other speakers in this dialogue, were aware that by Pan was meant our Lord: for the former, in the latter part of the paragraph, passes over from him to his disciples, and severely censures them for teaching the resurrection of the body, and entertaining sentiments different from him concerning the dæmons.

Secondly ; It has already been shewn from Josephus, Philo, and other authors, that the news was brought to Rome of the great king expected to hold universal empire in the world, having appeared in Judæa ; that this news threw the whole city into confusion, made many converts among the inhabitants, excited the alarm of Tiberius, and the indignation of the senate, and, finally, occasioned the banishment of the Jews and Egyptians resident in that city. In the above passage we see these facts corroborated. It is related in it, that the report of a person, deemed by some *Lord of all*, was conveyed by an Egyp-

tian to Rome, and that this report flew rapidly throughout the town, and became the subject of investigation by Tiberius, the senate, and the magicians in his court.

Thirdly; Thaumás and the Egyptians, whom Tiberius consulted, were at that time converts to the new faith, which indeed they blended with Gentile superstition. This fact is evident from the former giving him the appellation of *Pan*, which is a Greek term signifying *all*; and by which he must have intended to characterise him, as the beneficent prince that was to govern the world in equity, peace, and freedom. The representation which the latter gave Tiberius of our Lord renders it equally obvious that they regarded him as a *messenger from God*; for being asked by that emperor, Who this Pan was? they answered, that he was the son of *Mercury* and *Penelope* \*. Mercury, it is well known,

\* *Pan* was represented by some to be the son of Mercury and Penelope. Thus Herodotus—"Εκ Πηνελόπης και Ἑρμῆος λεγεται γενεσθαι ὑπο των Ελληνων ὁ Παν." And so writes Cicero—"Ex Mercurio et Penelope Pana natum ferunt." It is plain, therefore, that Thaumás and the philosophers meant by Pan the same person, and that they did not differ in their representation of him.

was the *messenger* of Jupiter, occasionally sent down from heaven for the service of mankind, and Penelope was a rare example of *chastity* and *virtue*. In describing him therefore as the son of Mercury, they held him up as a *divine messenger*, while, as the son of Penelope, they expressed *the extraordinary virtue* and purity of his character.

As Thaumás and the philologists, being composed of Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Persians, devoted to the study of magic and astrology, were, in name, at least, converts to the religion of Jesus, and evidently in the number of those that taught it in Rome, we may account for the general conversion of the Egyptians in that city, and for their being banished, together with the Jews, out of Italy.

Fourthly; The story of the voice at Paxus, which commanded Thaumás to announce the death of the great Pan, was a mere contrivance concerted by him and some others, for the purpose of impressing the company present with the belief, that the death of Jesus would prove the destruction



of the dæmons. Thaumas, we are told, was the *pilot*, and of course had the care and direction of the ship. The voice from the adjacent island, which commanded him to announce the death of the great Pan, came in the *night*: the sea was moreover *calm*, and the passengers were *carousing* after supper. Is it not then highly probable, from these circumstances, that it was the voice of a man of the same views with himself, whom he had privately sent on shore for this purpose, and who returned again into the ship after its accomplishment? The voice ordered him, immediately on his arrival at the Palodes, to announce "that the great Pan was dead." On this, Thaumas determined, if there should be wind, to pass by the Palodes in silence; but if it should prove calm in that place, he would announce what he had heard. Mark then the condition which was to determine his conduct: "If there was wind enough to sail forward, he would pass by in silence; but publish what he had heard, if the sea was becalmed." Which plainly amounts to this: if the wind should continue so as to enable the ship to proceed in its voyage, he should not have opportunity to execute his medi-

tated scheme. On the contrary, if the wind should subside, so as to retard its course, an opportunity for this would be given him. And it happened that, when they arrived at the place, *there was neither wind nor tide*. We are to suppose then, that at the Palodes, as in the island of Paxus, Thaummas secretly sent a person or persons on shore for the purpose of expressing "groans, mixed with astonishment," on hearing from the ship, that the great Pan was dead. "After this, Thaummas, placing himself at the stern, with his face to the land, announced, as he had heard, that the great Pan was dead. As soon as he had ended, immediately were uttered groans, mixed with astonishment, not as of one, but of a multitude."

These groans \*, and this astonishment, were supposed by the people in the ship to have proceeded from the dæmons in the

\* The dæmons are here represented as feeling the same emotions, and expressing the same dread and horror, which those recorded in the New Testament felt and expressed in the presence of our Lord. The conduct of Thaummas, therefore, on this occasion, points to the accounts there given respecting the dæmoniacs, and is founded upon them as known truths.

island, which were grieved and terrified at the news communicated to them. This news they considered as the fatal prelude of their destruction or banishment: since by his death (and his subsequent resurrection) the Lord of All irresistibly proved the truth of his divine mission, and afforded the surest pledge of his future triumph over evil spirits, and of his destroying that authority which they were supposed to exercise over the bodies and minds of men.

Fifthly; This passage in Plutarch farther explains and corroborates a remarkable passage in Tertullian, which, as I have already given a translation of it, I shall here set down in the original. “Tiberius ergo, cujus tempore Christianum nomen in seculum intravit, annunciata sibi ex Syriâ Palæstinâ, quæ illic veritatem istius divinitatis revelarant, DETULIT AD SENATUM CUM PRÆROGATIVA SUFFRAGII SUI: SENATUS, QUIA NON IPSE PROBAVERAT, RESPUIT.” The extraordinary fact here attested, that the emperor of Rome proposed to the senate to deify Jesus Christ, and place him in the number of the heathen gods, has long been called in ques-

tion, and is now rejected as false by most critics and divines ; though, at the same time, some men of learning and candour still think it true. But the fact is, that Tertullian, together with Eusebius, Orosius, and others who in subsequent times have recorded the matter, and pointed to him for their authority, has, in order to throw the veil of eternal oblivion over the origin of those corruptions which still debase the religion of Jesus, studiously kept out of sight the very circumstances which render it credible, and which are obviously implied in the narrative itself. The circumstances supposed in it are the following :—1. Some pretended friends of our Lord, in whom Tiberius had confidence, represented him to that prince as a being *above* human, or, in other words, as a *God*.—2. Those friends *solicited* Tiberius to propose the deification of Jesus to the senate.—3. Since these instigators sought to deify their master by a *human* decree, that is, by the very means which raised to divine honours the rabble of the Pantheon, they must have been *Gentile*, and not *Jewish* converts\*.

\* The evidence here adduced in favour of this singular and important fact, is, I presume, sufficient to establish the truth



With these implications, which, I believe, are fairly deduced from the fact attested by Tertullian, compare the above story in Plutarch. It inculcates, we have seen, that a

of it. We shall, however, see it abundantly confirmed hereafter from the writings of Philo, Josephus, the apostle Paul, the evangelist John, Lucius, Apuleius, and *Lucian*. The animadversions of *Gibbon* on this subject deserve to be quoted, as they serve to illustrate a just remark which he made on himself, viz. that "his views were rather *extensive* than *accurate*." "The apology of Tertullian," says he, "contains two very ancient, very singular, but, at the same time, very suspicious instances of imperial clemency; the edicts published by Tiberius and by Marcus Antoninus, and designed not only to protect the innocence of the Christians, but even to proclaim those stupendous miracles which had attested the truth of their doctrine. The first of these examples is attended with some difficulties which might perplex the sceptical mind. We are required to believe, *that* Pontius Pilate informed the emperor of the unjust sentence of death which he had pronounced against an innocent and, as it appears, a divine person; and that, without acquiring the merit, he exposed himself to the danger of martyrdom; *that* Tiberius, who avowed his contempt for all religion, immediately conceived the design of placing the Jewish Messiah among the gods of Rome; *that* his servile senate ventured to disobey the commands of their master; *that* Tiberius, instead of resenting their refusal, contented himself with protecting the Christians from the severity of the laws many years before such laws were enacted, or before the church had assumed any distinct name or existence, &c." Vol. ii. cap. xvi. p. 444.

certain Egyptian brought to Rome the news of the death of Jesus Christ ; that he and other magicians in favour at the court of Cæsar, represented him to be one of the good *dæmons* employed by heaven for the benefit of mankind ; and that Tiberius made the matter the subject of inquiry, and gave credit to such a representation. If then he believed that Jesus was a supernatural being, was it not natural in him to apply, at the instigation of his deceivers, to the senate, that they might give to this opinion the sanction of a law ? The story in Plutarch therefore attests, or rather implies, the fact asserted by Tertullian ; and it may be observed, conversely, that the assertion of Tertullian refers the narrative of Plutarch to no other than Jesus Christ,

Sixthly ; It appears very obvious from the above passage, that Thaumās, and the magicians who taught Christianity in Rome, represented our Lord to be one of the good *dæmons* that came down from heaven for the benefit of mankind. And, which is very remarkable, Cleombrotus, notwithstanding his

violence against the followers of Christ, seems to have considered him in the same light, since he conceded the truth of the story related by *Philip*, and shifts it off as a point foreign to the subject, though bearing the most obvious connection with it.

Now, the good dæmons, which were supposed to be the souls of dead men raised to the rank of gods, and made the objects of worship by Gentile superstition, were distinguished, on account of their superior utility and beneficence while yet among the living, by the appellation of ΧΡΗΣΤΟΙ. Of this take for a proof the following example from Plutarch :

“ Ὅθεν ὁ μὲν Πλάτων Ολυμπίοις θεοῖς τὰ δεξιά  
καὶ περιττά, τὰ δ' ἀντιφωνα τούτων δαίμοσιν, ἀπο-  
δίδωσιν. Ὁ δὲ Ξενοκράτης καὶ τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀπο-  
φράδας, καὶ τῶν ἐορτῶν ὅσα πληγὰς τινὰς, ἡ κοπε-  
τους, ἡ δυσφημίας, ἡ αἰσχρολογίας, ἐχουσιν, οὐτε  
θεῶν τιμαῖς οὐδὲ δαιμονῶν προσηκεῖν αἰετὰι ΧΡΗ-  
ΣΤΩΝ, ἀλλὰ εἶναι φύσεις ἐν τῷ περιέχοντι μέ-  
γαλας μὲν καὶ ἰσχυράς, δυστροπούς δὲ καὶ σκυθρω-  
πὰς, αἱ χαιροῦσιν τοῖς τοιαυτοῖς, καὶ τυγχάνουσαι

προς ουδεν αλλο χειρον τρεπονται· τους δε ΧΡΗΣΤΟΥΣ παλιν, και αγαθους, ο τε Ἡσιόδος αγνους δαιμονας και φυλακας ανθρωπων προσαγορευει.”

Since then the Egyptian converts at Rome inculcated, that Jesus was one of those dæmons denominated *good*, they of course applied to him the common denomination of ΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ, *Chrestus*. And this inference is confirmed by a very singular matter of fact. In very early times our Lord was actually called CHRESTUS; and to this corruption of his name we meet with frequent allusions in all the ancient writers, both friends and enemies of our Lord\*.

But what dæmon did they suppose Jesus to be? Or to whom of the ancients did they conceive the soul which animated him, and enabled him to do the things which he is said to have done, formerly to have belonged? The circumstance of our Lord being a *Jew* pointed their attention to one of the *Jewish patriarchs*; but as these men were *Egyptians*,

\* See on this subject the learned *Spencer*, vol. ii. p. 879. 880. *Ouzelius* apud *Min. Fel.* 253. *Tirinus* apud *Valer. Maximum*, p. 42. *Fossius*, *De Idol.* lib. i. cap. 29.



prejudice naturally directed them to the most distinguished among their own ancestors.

Now, if any one of those patriarchs were held in equal veneration by the two nations, however they might hate each other, to him they would have been likely to refer the dæmon which animated their new master. Joseph, it is well known, was alike revered by them. This person, in whom the Jews gloried as their ancestor, the Egyptians worshipped in the form of a *bull*, and under the title of *Serapis*. But Serapis was the same with *Osiris* \*. If then the magicians †

\* See *Plutarch, De Iside*, sect. 28.

† The Jewish people were divided in their opinion about our Lord. Astonished at his works and his wisdom, they imagined, some of them, that he was John the Baptist; some, that he was Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets: not that they meant that the *person* of Jesus was one of those persons, raised from the grave, and again reorganized, but that the *spirit* which animated either of the former, came and animated the latter. Now, was it not as natural in the Egyptians at Rome to refer the soul of our Lord to the patriarch Joseph, who was endeared to the inhabitants of Egypt, and even considered by them as one of their own race, as it was in the people of Judæa to ascribe it to one of their distinguished prophets? The prejudice then of the Jews in this respect illustrates and confirms what is here stated of the Egyptians.

looked upon Jesus to be the same with *Joseph*, it follows, that they must have thought him to be the same with *Osiris*, the principal god of the Egyptians. That the first Egyptian converts did in reality affect to consider Christ as no other than this divinity, is a fact that must appear highly probable from the following observations :

1. The command given to *Thaumas*, to announce at the *Palodes* that the great *Pan* was dead, is a fiction borrowed by him from the Egyptian mythology concerning *Osiris*. “ On a sudden a voice was heard from the island, calling aloud for *Thaumas*.—Though called twice, he continued silent ; but the third time he attended to the voice, which with great force commanded him thus : *When you shall have arrived at the Palodes, say that the great Pan is dead.*” Hear next what is recorded by *Plutarch* of *Osiris*. “ When *Osiris* was born, a voice was heard, saying, that the *Lord of all* is come into the world : and some attest, that one *Pamyles*, when fetching water, heard a voice from the temple of *Jupiter*, commanding him to announce, in a loud voice, *that the great and beneficent king*

*Osiris is born* \*.” Compare now these two paragraphs; and the former must, I presume, appear to have been founded on the latter. Hence it is evident, that Thaumasp had Osiris in his mind, when he designated our Lord by the title of *Pan*. From this, moreover, it is plain, that Thaumasp gave him that name, because he considered him, what Plutarch here asserts Osiris to be, *κυριος παντων*, *the Lord of all*.

2. That the Egyptian converts supposed Christ and Osiris to be the same, is a fact which is attested by the emperor *Adrian*. In his letter † to the consul *Servianus*, pre-

\* Τη μὲν πρώτη τον Ὀσίριν γενεσθαι, και φωνην αυτω τεχθεντι συνεκπεσειν, ὡς ἀπαντων κυριος εις φως προειπιν· ευισι δε Παμυλην τινα λεγουσιν, εν Θηζαις υδρευομενον, εκ του ιερου του Διος φωνην ακουσαι, διακελευομενην ανειπειν μετα βοης, ὅτι μεγας βασιλευς ευεργετης γεγονε. *De Iside, Sect. 12.*

† On this letter of the emperor, Lardner has the following paragraph, which shews how far he was from going to the bottom of the subject: “This appears to be fact from a letter of the emperor Hadrian, preserved by Vopiscus. A common report was, it seems, then spread in Egypt, that the Christians worshipped Serapis. The letter goes so far as to say, that the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Christians, that even the chief master of the synagogue, the Christian presbyters, and the bishops, and even the patriarch himself, wor-

served by Vopiscus, he writes, "*Illi qui Serapim colunt, CHRISTIANI SUNT: ET DEVOTI SUNT SERAPI, QUI SE CHRISTI EPISCOPOS DICUNT.*"

The Christians in Egypt would not, I conceive, as is here asserted of them, have been devoted to Serapis, or Osiris, unless they sup-

ported Serapis as well as Christ. Had this accusation been confined to a part of the Christians or Jews, or had any particular sort of heretics been mentioned, one might have thought it possible; but the charge is so general, that it can never be true. We must, therefore, seek for something in the custom of those times, which will account for the rise of such a calumny. And I think the use of amulets, which it is not improbable prevailed among some of the Christians in Egypt, as, we are assured, it afterwards did at Antioch, will account for it. The emperor makes no mention of the Basilidians, but charges the Christians at large with the crime. It may, therefore, as well be attributed to the Catholics as to them. The truth of the matter seems to be this: the emperor knew very little about the Christians, and took up this opinion from common report. He very probably heard that some Christians did use such amulets, on which, among other things, the name of Serapis was engraved; and as the heathens, in a like situation, would pay a particular regard to the god from whom they expected the cure, and were continually in the use of joining together the worship of all kind of deities; to him it would appear a very natural conclusion, that the Christians who used these amulets worshipped Serapis as well as Christ." Vol. ix. p. 295.



posed that there was some near affinity between them: nor would the bishops of Christ have considered themselves as the bishops of Serapis, had not both persons in their estimation been the same.

But this fact will appear more fully hereafter from the writings of Paul, Philo, Plutarch, and Apuleius. I proceed next to another observation on the above extract.

Seventhly; It unfolds the meaning, and proves the truth, of a passage in the works of the *apostate Julian*. The passage is as follows: “ \* Ye (speaking to the Christians) are so unhappy as not to continue in the things delivered to you by the Apostles—things carried by their descendents to a worse

\* Οὕτω δε εστε δυστυχεις, ὥστε οὐδε τοις ὑπο των ἀποστόλων ὑμιν παραδεδομένοις ἐκμεμενηκατε, καὶ ταῦτα δ' ἐπὶ τῷ χειρὸν καὶ δυσσεβέστερον ὑπο των ἐπιγινόμενων ἐξείργασθῃ. Τὸν γοῦν Ἰησοῦν οὔτε Παῦλος ἐτολμήσεν εἰπεῖν θεόν, οὔτε Ματθαῖος, οὔτε Λουκᾶς, οὔτε Μάρκος· ἀλλὰ ὁ ΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ Ἰωάννης, αἰσθόμενος ἤδη πολὺ πλῆθος ἑαλωκὸς ἐν πολλαῖς των Ἑλλήνων καὶ Ἰταλιωτῶν πόλεων ὑπο ταύτης τῆς νόσου· ἀκούων δέ, οἶμαι, καὶ τὰ μνημάτα Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου, λαθρα μὲν, ἀκούων δ' ὁμῶς αὐτὰ θεραπευόμενα, πρῶτος ἐτολμήσεν εἰπεῖν. Cyr. Con. *Jul. lib. x. p. 327.*

and more impious height. For neither Paul nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark, presumed to call Jesus *a God*: but the *dæmoni-  
sing* John, having heard that a great multitude in the cities of Greece and Italy were seised with this disorder, was the first of them that dared to advance his divinity."

Here it is asserted—1. That the Christian doctrine underwent a *change* from the form in which it was first delivered by the Apostles.—2. That this change consisted in the deification of its founder.—3. That it was effected in the cities of Italy and Greece.

Observe now how these assertions (which, be it remarked, ought to be credited, because the author had no apparent motive for making them, if they were not true) accord with, and are explained by the above extract from Plutarch. There we have seen, the philologers around Tiberius advanced our Saviour to the rank of *dæmons* or *gods*. This representation of him seems, on account of the extraordinary things allowed in early times, by all foes as well as friends, to have been done by him, to have obtained universal credit in

Rome, and, no doubt, in other cities of Italy and Greece. In the cities of Italy and Greece, therefore, the deification of Jesus must from this have first prevailed. And this is the fact which Julian positively asserts.

From the former it has, moreover, been shewn, that the first teachers of the divinity of Christ applied to him the title of *Chrestus*, expressive of his character as a good *dæmon*. And it is remarkable, that the latter *sarcas- tically* characterises *John* with that very epithet, for the supposed support which he gave to that doctrine.

Eighthly; A clause in the above extract brings to light the meaning of a passage respecting Tiberius, recorded by *Dion Cassius*. "Tiberius\*," says he, in his Life of that emperor, "reprobated these verses of the Sibyl: and he examined all the books containing predictions; and some he rejected as of no value, but others of them he approved."

\* Ὁ ἐν Τιβέριος ταῦτα τε τὰ ἐπη, ὡς καὶ ψευδῆ ὄντα, διε-  
 βάλε· καὶ βιβλία πάντα τὰ μαντεία τινα ἔχοντα ἐπεσκέψατο,  
 τὰ μὲν ὡς οὐδενὸς ἀξία ἀπέκρινε, τὰ δ' ἐνεκρίνε. *Dion Cassius*,  
 lib. lvii. p. 615.

Now, the question is, what motives induced Tiberius, on the occasion here mentioned, to inquire into, and condemn, the prophetic books, and some other oracles ascribed to the Sibyl? And what, in particular, were these books and these oracles? These important questions we may solve from the following words of Plutarch: "And as there were many men present, the report of this was propagated throughout Rome; so that Tiberius sent for Thaumastus, and asked of him, Who this Pan might be? AND MADE INQUIRIES CONCERNING HIM. But the philologers, who in great numbers surrounded the emperor, represented this Pan to be the son of Mercury and Penelope."

By representing our Lord as the son of Mercury and Penelope, the philologers, I have already shewn, signified, that he was a being of extraordinary purity, descended with a commission from heaven for the benefit of mankind.

This representation Tiberius, we may well suppose, was not inclined to believe, without proof; and to prove this, such of the



philologers as were Jews (in the number of whom, probably, was the wicked Jew mentioned by Josephus) naturally produced the prophecies, which had been delivered to their nation, concerning the expected Messiah. But these prophecies, when produced and examined, it was as natural in the emperor to esteem as of no value, and to reject as false, or unintelligible, or mere forgeries. The Gentiles had ever despised the religion, and hated the name of Jews. It was not therefore to be expected, that the emperor, or any other heathen, should give credit to their sacred writings \*. But the predictions of the *Sibyl* were believed and respected by both the Romans and Egyptians from time immemorial ; and some of these, we are told, Ti-

\* The sentiments of the heathens respecting the Hebrew prophets, and the divine mission of Moses, may be seen in the writings of *Lucian* and of *Celsus*. See the former in his *Alexander*, and the latter, apud Orig. lib. vii. p. 327. See also Justin's *Cohortatio*, p. 11. fol. ed. where he thus addresses the Greeks respecting Moses and the prophets: "Τοὺς ἡμεῖς τῆς ἡμετέρας βρῆσις διδασκαλοὺς γεγενῆσθαι φάμεν, μηδὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνθρώπινης αὐτῶν διανοίας διδάξαντας ἡμᾶς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς ἀνωθεν παρὰ Θεοῦ δοθείσης δωρεάς. Ὑμεῖς δὲ, ἐπεὶ διὰ τὴν πρότεραν τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν πλάνην, τοῦτοις πειθεσθαι οὐκ οἰεσθε δειν, τινὰς διδασκαλοὺς ὑμῶν ἀξιόπιστους τῆς θεοσεβείας γεγενῆσθαι φατε ;"

berius rejected as unauthentic. But before he could have rejected such oracles, they must have been *produced* by some of the philologers.

Now, the question is, were there extant at this time, among the heathens, any oracles, which professed to foretell the coming of our Lord into the world, and other circumstances belonging to him? There certainly existed no such writings. The conclusion then is most obvious, *That the oracles ascribed to the Sibyl, which Tiberius examined and rejected, were the forgeries of those Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Persians who became nominal converts to Christianity in Rome, and corrupted it with the heathen superstition.* Here then we see the *origin* of those false oracles which the fathers, to their great dishonour, have quoted under the name of *Sibylline oracles*, in their addresses to the Gentiles, as predictive of our Lord, and acknowledging the truth of his Gospel.

With regard to these oracles, learned men are at length agreed, “ that they are all, from first to last, and without any one exception,

mere impostures." So far they agree in the truth ; but as to the time of their composition, it appears from the above passages, and still more decisively from passages to be noticed in the next volume, that they agree in an error : for they suppose them to have been composed in the second century, about the year 128 or 130. That some of those which compose the present collection, in eight books, might have been fabricated at that period, or afterwards, is a supposition not very improbable. But the above conclusion from Plutarch and Dion Cassius proves, that the first specimens of them were extant in the days of Tiberius, many years before any of the writings of the New Testament were published. *Accordingly, we shall find, on due examination, that these oracles, and their base authors, are held up to public indignation, as false and unworthy of notice, by all the Apostles, and particularly by the great Apostle of the Gentiles.*

Tenthly ; It is expressly said by Tacitus and Suetonius \*, that the Jewish youths, in-

\* From these writers then we gather the curious and interesting information, at *what time*, and *by what means*, the Gospel

fectured with that superstition (that is, as I have shewn, the Jewish converts to the new faith) were transported into islands the severity of whose climates might prove destructive to them. Some of them, it is there-

was introduced into this island; and here we see confirmed all that is said by Origen, Tertullian, Eusebius, and others, concerning the introduction and the prevalence of it in this country in the days of the Apostles. A passage of Gildas, which I extract from *Camden's Britannia*, Gough's edition, p. 50, is on this subject highly deserving of notice, as it exactly coincides with the above inference drawn from the Roman historians. Speaking of Boadicea's revolt, and its consequences, that writer adds—"In the mean time, the island, exposed to the severest cold, and, as it were, in the extremity of the earth, out of the reach of the visible sun, WAS FIRST, UNDER THE REIGN OF TIBERIUS, AS WE WELL KNOW, FAVOURED WITH THAT TRUE SUN, SHINING NOT IN THE MATERIAL FIRMAMENT, BUT FROM THE HIGHEST HEAVENS, BEFORE ALL TIME, ENLIGHTENING THE WORLD WITH ITS BEAMS IN ITS APPOINTED TIME; i. e. CHRIST BY HIS PRECEPTS."

It is worthy of remark in this place, that the first Christian church established in this country was dedicated to the *Virgin Mary*. Now, the reason of its being dedicated to her will appear, when in the sequel of this volume it will be discovered, that some of the fabricators of the supernatural birth of Jesus, and of the exaltation, on that account, of his mother, were among the very persons who, by order of the senate, were banished from Rome to the British isles. On this subject see Fuller's *Eccles. Hist.* p. 7, if I recollect rightly.



fore natural to suppose, were sent to the *British* isles, where, of course, they carried with them the story of our Saviour's death, and their faith in him as the *Lord of all*.

This circumstance will account for the following tale, which *Demetrius* relates immediately after Philip had ended the narrative that he gives of the death of Christ.

“ And Philip had many witnesses present, who had heard those things from the aged *Æmilianus*. And *Demetrius* said, that there were many islands dispersed around Britain, some of which were celebrated for the demons and demi-gods abounding in them. There, at the command of the emperor, he sailed for the purpose of exploring the coasts. While he was lately in those islands, a great commotion and many strange appearances were seen in the air, accompanied by a violent wind and thunder. When the storm had ceased, the inhabitants told him, THAT SOME SUPERIOR BEING HAD BEEN DEPRIVED OF LIFE. For, as a candle when burning causes no harm, but if extinguished proves offensive to many ; so superior spirits, when kin-

dled with life, are inoffensive and beneficent, but when deprived of animation, they excite, on their extinction, hurricanes and tempests, and oftentimes poison the air with contagious disorders."

Now it is maintained, that by the superior being deprived of life, the inhabitants of Britain meant the *Son of God*, who was put to death in Judæa; and that the convulsions which took place in the heavens on his expiration were no other than the præternatural appearances which accompanied his crucifixion. For, it appears from the context, and the manner in which Demetrius introduces this story, that he considered this superior being to be the same with the *great Pan* mentioned in the preceding paragraph. But this Pan has already been proved to be the same with *Jesus Christ*. This appears also from Demetrius's design in relating this story; which was manifestly to confirm the account that Philip gave of the death of Pan. At first view, indeed, it would seem that the expiration of this being, and the concomitant agitation in the air, took place while he continued in the islands. But this is not his

meaning. He intended only to say, that he had lately been in the British isles, where the inhabitants informed him, that nature had some time before been agitated by the extinction of a superior being. Demetrius, indeed, was aware, that the person who thus suffered was no other than Jesus Christ ; but as he was not himself a believer in him, but an enemy to his followers and to his cause, he craftily endeavours to deprive them of the unequivocal proof that he was the Son of God, by artfully insinuating, that the supernatural appearances in the air were owing to the *god Saturn* having fallen asleep in one of those islands, and not, as the people supposed, to some good dæmon that expired in a distant country.

The language in which the death and the character of this superior being are delineated proves, moreover, that the inhabitants meant our divine master, who suffered in Judæa ; for they represent him as *beneficent* and *good*, while the light of life shone in him ; but say that the extinction of it proved prejudicial to multitudes. They describe finally his deprivation of existence, under a strong allusion to

a loss of light in the sun, to which our Lord is frequently compared in the New Testament, and in other sacred writings of very early as well as modern times. Their own words deserve again to be quoted: “Ὅτι τῶν κρείσσονων τινος ἐκλείψις γέγονεν:” BECAUSE THERE HAPPENED AN ECLIPSE OF SOME ONE OF THE SUPERIOR BEINGS. This is a literal translation of the clause; and it is language most evidently pointing to the darkness of the sun at the crucifixion of Jesus \*.

\* From this it appears certain, that not only Demetrius, but also Plutarch, and the other speakers in this dialogue, were well acquainted with the præternatural darkness which happened while Jesus hung on the cross, in proof of his divine mission. This surely is a circumstance sufficient to refute the insidious triumph of *Gibbon*, who boldly asserts, that this event was unknown to all the philosophers and observers of nature that lived, at the time, in the heathen world. But how should his boast and his confidence have been humbled, had he been aware, that a nation, not only remote from Judæa, but separated from the then known world by an innavigable sea; a nation for many years inaccessible to the Roman arms, and whom the attempt to approach was thought by their insolent invaders to be more dangerous than a conflict with them in the field of battle; that a nation thus situated felt the convulsion, which bore testimony to the innocence and the claims of Jesus; and that in the course of two years after his death they received and embraced his religion, while they opposed with success the power and the arts of Rome! In opposition, however, to his assertions, I shall engage to prove hereafter, that the darkness in question is ob-



It farther appears that he entertained the same opinion of the dæmons which the Christians did, and that he speaks of them in the same contemptuous language. He maintains, that they were not gods, and that they were all of a vicious disposition; and for this cites the authority of Plato, Empedocles, and others; and he calls them, too, by the name of εἰδωλα, *idols*, the very word generally used by the disciples of Jesus to express the *vanity* and *nullity* of the heathen deities \*. He defends, moreover, *Æmilianus* †, a *Christian*, and his master in rhetoric, from the accusation of *folly* and *confidence*, with which the Christian teachers were

scurely hinted at by Seneca, explicitly asserted by Phlegon, and wantonly ridiculed by Lucian; and that Plutarch and Pliny, though they had the artifice to disguise their knowledge, yet were well acquainted with this event, and adopted the disingenuous means of evading its force, by attempting to reduce into historical facts, and oppose to it, those natural occurrences, which the adulatory and poetic genius of Virgil and Horace aggrandized into supernatural appearances.

\* “ We know,” says the apostle Paul, “ that an idol is *nothing* in the world :” alluding, I conceive, to the name of idol, which in Hebrew signifies also *nothing*.

† It must appear obvious to the reader, that *Epitherses*, the father of *Æmilianus*, was also a believer in Jesus, and that probably he gave his son a Christian education.

commonly charged by their enemies. But what is principally to be regarded, he relates this tale of Jesus Christ, which he had received from Æmilianus, to shew that, in consequence of his death, the dæmons disappeared from the world; and appeals for the truth of it to several witnesses then present, who, as well as himself, had heard it from his master. Cleombrotus, indeed, seems to have been aware, that Philip was an advocate for the Gospel; and, doubtless, he had an eye to him in the severe censure which he passes upon the Christians, for believing the resurrection of the body.

Heracleon (another speaker in this dialogue) had, it is true, before endeavoured to remove this suspicion of Cleombrotus, by declaring, "that none of those who entertained such impious, profane, and incoherent sentiments respecting the gods, was then present." On this, turning to the suspected person, he makes the following remark: "Should we not, Philip, take heed, lest, by erecting our inquiry on a lofty foundation \*, we inadvert-

\* The lofty foundation, on which Philip erected his opinion respecting the expulsion of the dæmons, seems to have been

ently render it absurd." To this, Philip presently replies : " I am aware, Heracleon, that we have fallen upon a perplexed subject ; but it is not possible to arrive at a probable conclusion in an arduous inquiry, unless by having recourse to adequate principles. It is yourself who are guilty of inadvertency, in denying the very thing you grant ; for you confess that there are dæmons, while in the same breath you insist that they are *good* and *immortal*."

Lastly ; If then it be true, that Philip was a believer in Jesus, it must appear manifest, that this celebrated dialogue concerning the cessation of the heathen oracles originated in the opinion maintained by him and other Christians, that the expulsion of the dæmons from the world was occasioned by the pre-

the divine mission of Jesus, which had for its object the deliverance of mankind from their pernicious influence. Philip appears to have insisted, that the causes to which his opponents ascribed the departure of the dæmons, were neither true in themselves, nor adequate to the effect. Hence we may perceive his meaning in the following words : " It is not possible to arrive at a probable conclusion in an arduous inquiry, but by having recourse to *adequate* principles."

valence of the Gospel. Hence is confirmed (if any additional evidence be necessary to confirm it) the truth of my *second* proposition ; namely, that the object of Plutarch in writing this book was to oppose and check that growing \* opinion.

Having now finished my remarks on this book of Plutarch, I at length return to the Jewish historian, and to an examination of the long paragraph which he has written concerning *Paulina*. This, we have seen, is subjoined by Josephus to the disputed passage about our Lord. But what connexion has it with the history of Jesus Christ ? What had the narrative of a woman at Rome, devoted to the Egyptian superstition, and betrayed into adultery by the priests of Isis, to do with a man that lived and died in Judæa ?

The fact, that Josephus was a believer ;

\* It is worthy of remark, that this celebrated dialogue on the cessation of the heathen oracles, being written by an enemy of the Christians and their cause, is partially related ; and that those parts in particular, which respect Jesus and his followers, are represented, if not much mutilated, in the dark and invidious colours of malice and bigotry.



that in several parts of his writings he enforces the truth of the Gospel, and defends its founder and his faithful followers from calumny and persecution; furnishes a clear solution to these questions. Josephus saw, that a doctrine maintaining the supernatural birth of Jesus, was gaining ground in Italy, Greece, and Egypt, and inculcated by its votaries, as a branch of the Gospel taught by our Lord and his Apostles. To check this false and preposterous opinion, and to cut up by the roots the calumnies which unbelievers borrowed from it and its base authors, to asperse the original founders of Christianity—he points out the place where it first originated, relates the very incident that gave it birth, and holds up the man that fabricated it to public indignation.

Behold then, Christian ! an important discovery presented to thee by the immortal author of the *Jewish Antiquities* ; viz. THAT THE SUPPOSED MIRACULOUS BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST IS A FABRICATION OF THE PRIESTS OF ISIS AT ROME, COPIED FROM THE ADULTERY OF A WOMAN DEVOTED

# TO THE VILEST OF THE HEATHEN DEITIES \*.

\* Let us however grant, for the sake of argument, that Josephus was *not* a believer in Jesus, and that the exposure of the miraculous conception related of Mary was not his object in recording the above story concerning Paulina : the following positions, founded on a law of the human mind, which is the same, whether he was a friend or a foe to the Gospel, will lead us to the same conclusion :

1. Admitting the truth and genuineness of the accounts inserted in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, yet Josephus, being "as much a Jew as the law of Moses could make him," did not believe their truth ; as he did not receive his claim to the Messiahship, supported, as it was, by proofs the most powerful, would he have allowed the truth of the miraculous conception, which depended only on the attestation of his mother ? Josephus, therefore, must have been of opinion, that Mary, while she *pretended* to be pregnant by the spirit of God, was, in reality, pregnant by a man.

2. Josephus, when writing the paragraph respecting Jesus, must necessarily have had in his mind the story of his miraculous birth. A tale so remarkable, and, at the same time, so singular, could not but be present to his recollection, when he was describing his character, and contemplating that very wisdom and power, which proved him to be the Son of God. He had, therefore, in his thoughts a woman, who having conceived of a human being, professed that she conceived of the Holy Spirit. That the writer had such an idea, on the occasion, in his mind, is proved from fact : for he has immediately subjoined to the passage, in which he speaks of our Lord, the story of another woman at Rome, who made a similar profession.

But in order to demonstrate the truth of this important fact, and to settle all disputes

3. As Josephus had associated the story of the miraculous birth with the name and character of Christ, but at the same time did not believe the truth of it, he (upon the supposition of his being a Jew) necessarily would have imputed it to Jesus himself, his mother, or his disciples, as a gross, absurd, and even impious imposture; if, in reality, such a tale had originated in them, or had been propagated by them in Judæa. As a Jew, that is, as one who was an enemy to Jesus and his cause, he had every possible inducement to urge this imputation. This is no more than what every other Jew, properly so called, would have done. All the Jewish nation, from the time of our Saviour to the present day, discredited the story; and those of them, who looked upon the accounts as given in Matthew and Luke to be authentic, have imputed the story to our Lord and his friends as a false and infamous contrivance; and if Josephus was not a Christian, why should not he, as well as his brethren, have represented it in the same light? It follows then, in as much as he has not charged Jesus, or his mother, or any of his followers in Judæa, with the doctrine which appeared to him to be downright impiety, that he could not make such a charge with any colour of truth. In other words, the invention of the miraculous conception could not, in the judgment of Josephus the Jewish historian, be ascribed to Jesus Christ, his relations, or his apostles.

4. Lastly; since Josephus could not accuse our Saviour, or his disciples in Judæa, with the doctrine of his pretended præternatural birth, the mere impulse of association must have led him, when writing the preceding paragraph, to the place where the story originated, and to the persons by whom it was fabricated. Accordingly, on finishing the

about it for ever, I shall lay down, and prove, the following propositions :

I. *The story of the miraculous conception of Mary, as inserted in MATTHEW and LUKE, is the very same with this story of Paulina, related by Josephus, (altered, indeed, in some minute circumstances) and the substance of the events composing those chapters did in reality happen in ROME, and not in JERUSALEM.—The doctrine of the supernatural birth of Jesus is taught in no other part of the New Testament : on the contrary, the whole of his history supposes our Lord to be the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary, and a native of Nazareth.—The accounts, inserted in the beginning of the above mentioned Gospels, have been extracted by some early Christian, educated in the*

passage concerning Jesus, he abruptly passes over from Judæa to Rome, and relates the long story respecting Paulina ; the summary of which is, that a woman, who had either the wickedness or the weakness to spend a night in the arms of a man, pretended that she was administering to the pleasure of Anubis.

It follows, therefore, from the law of association, operating in the mind of Josephus, that the adultery of Paulina is the real source of the miraculous conception of Mary.



*Egyptian school, from two Gospels originally composed, the one by the wicked Jew whom Josephus mentions, the other by THAUMAS noticed by Plutarch.*

II. *The men who first maintained in Rome the divinity and the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ, maintained also (as being partly Egyptians) the opinions held by the GNOSTICS; and were zealous, moreover, (as being in part Jews) for the rites of the Mosaic law.—In consequence of the expulsion of the Christians from Italy by the Roman senate, these impostors propagated their heresies through Greece and Egypt, and introduced them even into the churches among the Gentiles, established by the apostle Paul.—Our Lord, being divinely inspired, FORESAW the fabrication of the doctrines of his divinity and supernatural birth at Rome, and was led, in certain circumstances, by the great law of the association of ideas to warn his disciples against them. He also furnished them with striking facts, by recording which, they might, on his authority alone, convince the world of the falsehood of those doctrines. Accordingly the evangelists Mark, Luke, and John, wrote their Gospels chiefly with this view, and adopted the admirable me-*

thod, not of opposing their ASSEVERATIONS to prevailing falsehoods, but simply of stating well authenticated facts, and of leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions.—The prevalence of the impostures from Rome was the mean which the wisdom of Providence adopted to call forth the writings of the New Testament.—The apostles Paul, Peter, and John, in their respective Epistles, give them the most decided opposition, and stigmatize their authors as liars and deceivers.

III. *The Jewish and Egyptian converts, when banished from Rome, carried the new faith with them into Egypt, where it was embraced by a great part of the Jews and Egyptians resident in that country, during the interval of public tranquillity above noticed from Philo.—The patrons of the Egyptian superstition, being alarmed and exasperated at its rapid prevalence, at length instigated Caligula to check it, by persecuting its professors, and by holding himself up as a God, to be worshipped by the Jews and Gentiles, in opposition to Jesus Christ, deified and made the object of divine honours in Egypt.—The Christian converts, in order to put an end to the grievous calamities*

*which they were now suffering in Alexandria and other places, commissioned Philo, with some others, to that emperor, to vindicate their innocence from the charges brought against them by APION and other devotees of Isis.—Philo, having failed in the object of his embassy, published, on his return home, in two books, a defence of the followers of Jesus in Judæa and Egypt; in which he holds them up as a body of men not to be equalled for wisdom and virtue among the human race; and vindicates the truth of their doctrine by its unrivalled efficacy in reforming the vices of mankind.—Josephus, treading in the steps of the magnanimous Philo, inserted in his History of the Jewish War an account of the Christians in Judæa and other countries; and throughout the whole of his narrative opposes his testimony to the accusations propagated against them by their enemies.*

IV. *All the ancient Christian writers called the FATHERS, knew, successively, that the doctrines of the miraculous conception of Mary, and the divinity of Jesus, originated with the Egyptian converts at Rome; and that they might conceal the origin of them, they not only forbore to mention the introduction of the Gospel*

*into Rome, and the astonishing events that followed in that city, and in Egypt, but made use of various artifices and equivocations, in order to bury them in everlasting oblivion.*

V. *The adversaries of the Gospel in ancient times, among the Gentiles, such as Plutarch, Julian, Porphyry, and others, fully knew, that these doctrines originated with the magicians in the court of Tiberius, and were in after times incorporated with the Christian system, in direct opposition to the authority of the Apostles; but at the same time did not expose the fraud, as it furnished them with abundant materials for calumniating our Lord and his faithful followers in Judæa, and with plausible grounds for ascribing their miracles to those magical artifices which were practised by the first Egyptian converts. This artifice, with others of the kind, as well as the many concessions which they have been forced to make, demonstrate, that in their hearts they were convinced of the truth of Christianity, and of the divine mission of its author, and that their opposition to it proceeded from rank malignity and interested motives.*



VI. *It appears from the writings of the ancient Jews, that they were fully acquainted with the true origin of those doctrines, and with the strenuous opposition given to them by the Apostles ; but, nevertheless, affected to consider them as branches of Christianity, from the same motive which actuated its enemies among the Gentiles. The author of the Jewish tract entitled TOLDOTH JESEHU, or the BIRTH OF JESUS, copied his account from the story of Paulina, recorded by Josephus, as the origin of the miraculous conception of Mary.*

Such are the propositions, which, being founded upon the context in which the disputed passage concerning Jesus stands, I propose, in the remainder of this, and in a series of volumes, to demonstrate.

Their importance must be confessed by all my readers ; and if the evidence produced in proof of them be decisive, I trust that the inquiry will render an essential service to the interests of the Gospel, and, indeed, place its truth on a basis that can never be moved.

I. *My first object then is to shew, that the story of the miraculous conception of Mary, as inserted in Matthew and Luke, is the very same with this story of Paulina, related by Josephus, altered indeed in some of its circumstances; and that the substance of the events composing those chapters did in reality happen in Rome, and not in Jerusalem—That the doctrine of the supernatural birth of Jesus is taught in no other part of the New Testament; on the contrary, the whole of his history supposes our Lord to be the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary, and a native of Nazareth—That the accounts inserted in the beginning of the above mentioned Evangelists have been extracted by some early Christians educated in the Egyptian school, from two Gospels originally composed, one by the wicked Jew whom Josephus mentions, and the other by Thaumas noticed in Plutarch.*

In order to see how the two stories accord with each other, it is necessary to consider what is said of the conduct of this celebrated woman by ancient writers. And I begin with Josephus himself.

Here then it is to be observed, that *Paulina*, mentioned in the first paragraph, and *Fulvia* in the next, are but two different names of the same woman. This will appear indisputable, if we examine what is said concerning her in the two passages.

In each of these passages she is described as the wife of *Saturninus* ; and this Saturninus is, as evidently in both, the same man, the particular friend of Tiberius, who, at his instigation, interfered in behalf of his injured spouse. Accordingly, when speaking of her under the name of *Fulvia*, Josephus alludes to her seduction in the temple of Isis, before mentioned—"Αποσημαινει γαρ προς Τιβεριον φιλος ων Σατυρνινος, της Φουλβιας ανηρ, επισκηψει της γυναικος." That is, *Saturninus, at the instigation of his wife, lays the business before Tiberius.*

In the passage preceding he says of her—"Εγεγαμητο δε Σαταυρνινω, τω εις τα παντα αντισουμενω των περι αυτην αξ.ολογων.—'Η δ' εις διανοιαν τοτε πρωτον ελθουσα του τολμηματος περιηγνυται τε την στολην, και τ' ανδρι δηλωσασα του παντος επιβουλευματος το μεγαθος, εδει το μη περι-

ωφθαι βοηθείας τυγχάνειν. 'Ο δὲ τῷ αυτοκράτορι ἐπισήμηνε τὴν πράξιν." *She was married to Saturninus, who in every respect equalled the elevated qualities of his spouse.—Having then first discovered the nature of the atrocious deed, into which she had been betrayed, and disclosed the whole of it to her husband, she intreated him not to leave unpunished the injury done her. He therefore laid the matter before the emperor.*

Since then it cannot be doubted but that Paulina and Fulvia are but two different names of the same woman, it follows hence,

1. That as the four men with whom she associated, and by means of whom she embraced the Jewish religion, have been shewn to be the persons who introduced and taught Christianity in Rome, she must have been a convert to the Christian doctrine. It follows, also,

2. That the three persons whom Josephus represents as the associates of the wicked Jew, in teaching the law of Moses, were no other than the Egyptian priests mentioned



in the preceding paragraph as concerned in the seduction of Fulvia.

3. It must farther appear probable, that Thaumias, mentioned by Plutarch, was in the number of these priests of Isis, who associated with this Jew; and that these four men formed, in part, the philologers around Tiberius, who embraced Christianity, and deified its founder.

4. We may conclude, moreover, that as these priests of Isis were concerned with the Jew in robbing the temple of the presents made for its use by Fulvia, so he was an instrument with them in effecting her seduction. And this inference is supported by the indignant apostrophe with which, as I have shewn, the apostle Paul addresses him. "Behold! thou callest thyself a Jew, and reposest thyself on the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and art taught to distinguish the excellences of the law; and takest upon thyself to be a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes; as possessing the characters of knowledge and

truth in the law. Dost thou, then, that teachest another, neglect to teach thyself? Dost thou, who preachest against stealing, thyself steal? Dost thou, who forbiddest adultery, commit adultery? Dost thou abhor idols, and yet profanely rob the temple?"

It has already been shewn, that the crimes of robbery, of murder, of lewdness, adultery, and the like, originated with the first Egyptian converts at Rome; that is, with the men whom Josephus represents as being guilty of such enormities. And this is confirmed by what our Apostle next says to the wicked Jew and his associates: "Dost thou glory in a law, and by the transgression of this very law dishonour God? FOR THE NAME OF GOD IS EVIL SPOKEN OF THROUGH YOU AMONG THE GENTILES."

I cannot here help remarking, though I am encroaching on the subject of the next volume, that the men here alluded to seem, from the subsequent words of the Apostle, not to have been originally *Jews*, but Gentile converts; meaning, no doubt, the Egyptians who in name embraced the Gospel. "He

is not a Jew, who is one outwardly in the flesh ; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and that is circumcision, which is a circumcision of the heart, in the mind, not in the precept." As if he had briefly said, " You are become Jews in profession. Do not mistake the character which you thus sustain : it consists not in a compliance with the external institutions of the law, but in the cultivation of that moral purity which these institutions are calculated and intended to produce."

5. In these two passages we see a decisive proof, that Josephus was a believer in Christianity, and that he used his great talents and influence in defending its professors from calumnies and persecution. The Christian doctrine he characterizes as *the wisdom of the Mosaic laws*, and endeavours to shelter it from odium and intolerance, under the paternal wings of *Judaism*. Indeed, Judaism is the title which the Gospel usually bore in very early times, among both the Gentile unbelievers and the Jewish converts ; the former of whom did not know, and the latter of whom did not admit, of any distinction between the religion of Moses and that of Jesus ; as in their

conception the one was only the perfection or the developement of the other \*.

Tacitus, we have seen, insinuates, that the Jews banished by the senate, were

\* Respecting the confusion of Christianity with Judaism in very early times, see Mr. Wakefield's excellent Commentary on Matthew, p. 317, and Jor. Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 8.

To Pliny, Martial, Tacitus, and Suetonius, who, as was natural, made this confusion, we may add *Plutarch* and *Juvenal*. The former of these, in his book concerning *Superstition*, which, it will appear hereafter, he wrote against the *Christians*, thus speaks:—"Αρετης γαρ ελπις ο Θεος εστιν, ου δειλιας προφασις· αλλα ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ, σαββατων οντων, εν αγναμπτοις καθεζομενοι, των πολεμιων κλιμακας προστιθεντων, και τα τειχη καταλαμβανοντων, ουκ ανεστησαν, αλλα εμειναν, ωσπερ εν σαγγηνη μια, τη δεισιδαιμονια, συνδεδεμενοι." *Plutarch*, vol. ii. p. 163.

The author here alludes to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Compare the last clause with *Matthew*, cap. xxxiii. 37; and with *Luke*, xix. 43, 44.

Juvenal, towards the beginning of his *third satire*, thus writes respecting the expulsion of the *Jews*, part of whom were converts to the Gospel, by an edict of *Domitian*.

Nunc sacri fontis nemus, et delubra locantur  
*Judæis*, quorum cophinus fœnumque supellex.

The cruelty of that fell tyrant towards the followers of Jesus, is alluded to, as has been observed by some learned men, in the following lines of the same writer :



guilty of robbery, and of other excesses; and it cannot be doubted, but that it was maintained by their enemies in Rome, that the whole nation thus suffered, because they were all equally criminal. In opposition to such assertions, Josephus has given his testimony: "THE JEWS WERE DRIVEN FROM THE CITY, BECAUSE OF THE WICKEDNESS OF FOUR MEN."

The charges of murder, incest, and lewdness, extended by their enemies to the virtuous followers of Jesus, were founded, I have shewn, on the atrocities committed by the first Egyptian converts in the temple of Isis. Josephus, in order to repel those unjust charges, relates their guilty deed respecting Paulina, *not as the disciples of Jesus* (though they were at this time his disciples in name), *but as the priests of Isis*, disdain-

Atque utinam his potius nugis tota illa dedisset  
 Tempora sævitæ, claras quibus abstulit urbi  
 Illustresque animas impune, et vindice nullo.  
 Sed periit, postquam cerdonibus esse timendus  
 Cœperat. Hoc nocuit Lamiarum cæde madenti.

Sat. iv. ad fin.

Some remarks are made on these lines by Lardner. See vol. vii. p. 263.

ing to give them the appellation of Jewish converts; and it is remarkable, that when he notices them, as concerned with the wicked Jew in teaching the wisdom of the Mosaic laws, he passes over their *names* in scornful silence, and only characterises them “as being in every respect wicked men.”

In order, moreover, to keep out of sight the mortifying inference, that an honourable convert to the religion of Jesus was weak or base enough to have connexion with the devotees of Egyptian superstition, and particularly to sacrifice her virtue and honour at the shrine of Anubis, he distinguishes her, in the first instance, by the name of *Paulina*, and in the second by the denomination of *Fulvia*, which was, perhaps, her own name; whereas the former she appears, from an epigram in Martial, soon to be cited, to have received from one *Paullus*, either her gallant or her husband.

This woman, because she embraced the new religion, was made by its adversaries, at once, the object of ridicule, satire, and reproach. But this circumstance which brought

upon her the hatred of the Romans, engaged this illustrious friend of Christianity in her favour. He accordingly palliates, though he does not justify, her conduct, and ascribes her misfortune to delusion, and not, as her accusers maintained, to artifice. Candour, however, obliges me to observe, that the apology which Josephus offers for her behaviour is, upon the face of it, very partial; since the story, even as it is related by himself, affords a strong presumption, that, under the pretence of being invited by Anubis, she went to gratify some favourite person or other, and that beforehand she was conscious of this, however she might affect the contrary, after the deed had, against her wishes, been discovered.

Juvenal, as well as Josephus, has noticed this celebrated woman; but he gives a very different character of her in his Satire on *Women*; a piece well known to learned men, though, perhaps, they need to be informed, that the persons who have so powerfully called forth his indignation and ridicule, were, for the most part, ladies of rank and fortune, that had embraced the Gospel in Rome. In

proof of this, I shall shew, that *Hippia*, who makes the most prominent figure in that famous performance, is no other than the *Paulina*, or *Fulvia*, recorded by the Jewish historian.

At this assertion, the reader will, perhaps, be surprised; but when truth is advanced, surprise, in the breast of candour, will give way to conviction.

In support of the proposition, I will shew, that the circumstances recorded by the Jewish historian, are clearly alluded to, and confirmed, by the Roman satirist.

The term *Hippia*, which Juvenal assigns to her, is a pure Greek word (*ἵππια*), signifying *a beautiful female*. This appellation the poet bestows on her, as descriptive of her personal beauty; for which, as we learn from Josephus, she was much distinguished.

In the Jewish Antiquities she is represented as a woman of rank, and married to a person of great dignity. The following line attests the same fact:



Nupta senatori, comitata est Hippiâ ludum.

Sat. vi. 82.

According to the historian, she was much addicted to the worship of Isis. For her devotion in this respect she is ridiculed by the poet :

————— Ecce furentis

Bellonæ, Matrisque Deûm, chorus intrat. 510, 511.

*See Cybele's and mad Bellona's choir  
Enter the house to pay her their devoir \*.*

Josephus asserts that she was a proselyte to *Judaism*. Her superstition, as a *Jewess*, is laughed at in Juvenal :

Cum dedit ille locum, cophino fœnoque relicto,  
Arcanam JUDÆA tremens mendicat in aurem.

541, 542.

*This rabble gone, a Jewess next, with fear,  
Inspires her story in the lady's ear.*

That she made some presents to the Jews, as is related by Josephus, might be inferred from this writer :

Implet et illa manum, sed parciûs, ære minuto:  
Qualiacunque voles Judæi somnia vendunt.

545, 546.

\* The translation of these and the following lines I have taken from the excellent Version of Mr. Owen.

The assignation which she made in the temple of Isis ; her unusually ornamental style of dress upon the occasion ; the pleasure which the invitation from Anubis gave her ; her haste in going ; together' with the preparation for her reception ; all which are particularly specified by Josephus ;—the satirist thus describes :

Nam si CONSTITUIT, SOLITOQUE DECENTIUS OPTAT  
ORNARI, ET PROPERAT, JAMQUE EXPECTATUR in hortis,  
Aut apud ISIAE POTIUS SACRARIA LENÆ ;  
Disponit crinem laceratis ipsa capillis,  
Nuda humero, Psecas infelix, nudisque mamillis.  
Altior hic quarè cincinnus ? Taurea punit  
Continuò flexi crimen facinusque capilli.

486—492.

From Josephus we learn, that the *chief* of the priests of Isis, who brought her the wished-for invitation, obtained a private interview with her, and that by his contrivance Mundus was afterwards concealed in the temple. On these circumstances the following significant lines seem to have been founded :

ADVOCAT ARCHIGENEN, onerosaque pallia jactat :  
AEDITUS INTEREA LATET, ET SECRETUS ADULTER,  
IMPATIENSQUE MORÆ SILET—

235—238.

“ The person in whose arms,” says her historian, “ she spent the night, was a Roman knight; and the slave that planned the scheme of her seduction was *crucified*, at the instigation of her husband, who had himself been instigated by her.” To these incidents the satirist pointedly alludes :

Sed jacet in servi complexibus, aut *EQUITIS*.—278.

Again :

PONE CRUCEM SERVO : meruit quo crimine servus  
Supplicium ? Quis testis adest ? quis detulit ?

218, 219.

*Go, crucify that slave ! the lady storms :*

*Pray, what is his crime ? who proves ? who informs ?*

From the account of Josephus, however partial, we may infer, that while her friends judged her innocent, some, notwithstanding, entertained suspicion of her guilt. On the contrary, that her criminality was not maintained by *all*, but that some specious plea was urged in her defence, we may gather from Juvenal, her bitterest enemy :

Dic aliquem, sodes, dic, Quintiliane, colorem.

Hæremus ; dic ipsa—— 279, 280.

*What can be said ? O ! come, Quintilian, free  
The pretty culprit by some specious plea.*

*Impossible! he cries. Then, madam, try  
What your own better genius can supply.*

The influence which she had over her husband, his mistaken confidence in her virtue, and the application which she made for his protection, after the discovery of her guilt, are paralleled by the following description :

———— Aut ficta pellice plorat,  
Uberibus semper lacrymis, semperque paratis  
In statione sua, atque expectantibus illam,  
Quo jubeat manare modo : TU CREDIS AMOREM,  
TU TIBI TUNC CURRUCA PLACES, FLETUMQUE LABELLIS  
EXSORBES———— 271—275.

These coincidences are, I presume, sufficient to prove my assertion, that the Paulina, or Fulvia of Josephus, is no other than the Hippias of Juvenal. Features so various, so extraordinary, and, at the same time, so similar to each other, must have been copied from the same original. We are, therefore, at liberty to use such incidents respecting her, as are farther furnished by this noble satirist. Very important, indeed, to our purpose is the information conveyed in the following lines :

Nupta senatori, comitata est Hippias ludum  
Ad Pharon, et Nilum, famosaque moenia Lagi,



Prodigia et mores urbis damnante Canopo.  
 Immemor illa domûs, et conjugis atque sororis,  
 Nil patriæ indulsit, plorantesque improba natos,  
 Utque magis stupeas, ludos, Paridemque reliquit.

82—87.

*Hippia, who to a senator was wed,  
 Forsook her husband, AND TO ÆGYPT FLED.  
 A player her mate; e'en lewd Canopus staring  
 At this lewd prank, as past her utmost daring.*

We are further informed, that this woman pretended to hold conversation with *Isis* in nightly dreams; and that she went into Egypt in consequence of a command which her favourite divinity gave in her sleep.

————— Si candida jusserit Io,  
 Ibit ad Ægypti finem, calidaque petitas  
 A Meroë portabit aquas, ut spargat in æde  
 Isidis, antiquo quæ proxima surgit ovili.  
 CREDIT ENIM IPSIUS DOMINÆ SE VOCE MONERI.  
 EN ANIMAM ET MENTEM CUM QUA DII NOCTE  
 LOQUUNTUR! 525—530.

SHOULD *ISIS* BID, *obsequious would she run*  
*To Meroë, perch'd by the meridian sun,*  
*To fetch some holy water for the dome,*  
 THAT 'S *ISIS* FAVOURITE TEMPLE HERE AT ROME:  
 FOR SHE BELIEVES EACH SILLY WHIM SHE FEELS  
 A HEAVEN-SENT DREAM, WHICH *ISIS* SELF REVEALS.  
*A likely soul, and spirit to be bless'd,*  
*With heav'nly converse in the hours of rest!*

From Egypt she presently returns, and again lives with the husband, whom, not long after her marriage, she had abandoned.

Inde

Avolat, et spreti repetit vestigia lecti.  
Ornatas paulò antè foras, pendentia linquit  
Vela domûs, et adhuc virides in limine ramos.  
Sic crescit numerus; sic fiunt octo mariti.

224—229.

*Thus brings she her tame husband to her cue;  
Then quits these kingdoms in pursuit of new,  
And match on match contracts, and wears and batters  
Her very bridal veil to rags and tatters;  
Then whirls about, with her old passion burns,  
And to her former husband she returns.  
The house she quits, just deck'd with leaves before,  
With garlands hung yet green upon the door.*

The time of her return from Egypt was in the reign of Caligula, some time after the death of Tiberius. This appears from a passage, already quoted, in Dion Cassius, where he asserts, that some amongst the *societies*, consisting of Jewish and Egyptian converts, returned to Rome, in the reign of that emperor.

Let me be permitted in this place to produce what that historian observes in respect to those

societies, and what, before, it would have been premature to have noticed. “ The emperor, seeing that it was of no avail to command the people to abstain from certain customs, unless enforced by daily compulsion, shut up those public houses which they frequented for the sake of drinking, and forbade that any of them should sell *seasoned meat, or warm water.*”

Now the *warm water*, here mentioned, was not, I conceive, water heated by the fire, but such as was naturally so, and brought from Egypt to be used by the devotees of Isis and Osiris, at the celebration of their festivals. A passage just quoted, in which Juvenal speaks of Paulina, is sufficient to determine this point :

————— Si candida jusserit Io,  
Ibit ad Ægypti finem, CALIDÆQUE petitas  
A Merœe portabit AQUAS, ut spargat in æde  
Isidis —————

The water of this lake, and that of the Nile, was used by those women in Rome, and other places, who attended the nocturnal orgies of the Egyptian divinities. Of this water they made use, on account of its in-

inflammatory nature, and of its tendency to promote either fecundity or barrenness, as it suited their respective inclinations. That it had these opposite effects, we are told by *Athenæus*, who quotes the words of Theophrastus on the subject. There is reason to fear that the women devoted to the worship of Isis at Rome, continued this abominable practice after their nominal conversion to the Christian faith, and, moreover, used in their festivals *sumptuous diet, spirituous liquors*, and other *inflammatory aliments*, in order, at once, to kindle their lusts, and gratify their appetites. Hence Cæcilius thus accuses the Christians in general: “ Et de convivio notum est; passim omnes loquuntur. Ad epulas solemnæ die coeunt, cum omnibus liberis, sororibus, matribus, sexûs omnis homines, et omnis ætatis. Illic, post multas epulas, ubi convivium caluit, et incestæ libidinis fervor ebrietate exarsit, canis, qui candelabro nexus est, jactu offulæ ultra spatium lineæ, quâ vinctus est, ad impetum et saltum provocatur: sic everso et extincto conscio lumine, impudentibus tenebris nexus infandæ cupiditatis involvunt per incertum sortis: et si non omnes operâ, conscientiâ tamen pariter incesti; quo-



niam voto universorum appetitur, quidquid accidere potest in actu singulorum." *Min. Fel.* p. 88.

And it is for this custom that Juvenal, in the above-mentioned satire, reproaches the Christian women at Rome :

————— Quid enim Venus ebria curat ?

Inguinis et capitis quæ sint discrimina nescit.  
Grandia quæ mediis jam noctibus ostrea mordet ;  
Cum perfusa mero spumant unguenta Falerno,  
Cum bibitur conchâ, cum jam vertigine tectum  
Ambulat, et geminis exsurgit mensa lucernis.  
.....

Nota Bonæ secreta Deæ, cum tibia lumbos  
Incitat ; et cornu pariter, vinoque feruntur  
Attonitæ, crinemque rotant, ululantque Priapi  
Mænades. O quantus tunc illis mentibus ardor  
Concubitûs ! Quæ vox saltante libidine ! Quantus  
Ille meri veteris per crura madentia torrens !

Sat. vi. 299—318.

Pliny, however, candidly acknowledges, that the Christians in *Bithynia* did not use, when met together, any of these means to inflame their passions ; but came only to a *plain* and *simple* meal, in which there was nothing hurtful, rare, or inflammatory. His words are these : “ Quibus peractis, morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coëundi ad

capiendum cibum, PROMISCUUM TAMEN,  
ET INNOXIUM."

The poet *Martial* has also noticed this distinguished woman, and has written several epigrams upon her, under the name of *Fabulla*.

The similarity of *Fulvia* and *Fabulla* affords some presumption, previously to any other proof, that they denote the same person; the difference between them being such as might be easily accounted for. Names, whether of men or things, necessarily change with the flux of time. This is more particularly the case, when frequently used either in speech or in writing, and transfused into another tongue; both which circumstances took place with regard to the name of this woman.

But the change of *Fulvia* into *Fabulla* might have proceeded not so much from unavoidable corruption, as from *design*. Plutarch, in his *Quæstionibus Romanis*, mentions a concubine of Hercules, named Φαέολα, the celebrity of whose lewdness at Rome procured her divine honours.

The enemies of Fulvia, seeing her distinguished by the base spirit of this goddess, might, on that account, more exactly bestow upon her the name; and, instead of *Fulvia*, call her *Fabola*, or *Fabulla*.

*Fabulla*, indeed, is once mentioned by Juvenal himself, in the second satire\*; and mentioned too in such a manner as to render it not improbable that she was the same with *Hippia*. On the contrary, Martial has nowhere, as far as I recollect, noticed a woman so called; and this affords some presumption that he has written upon the same person under a different denomination. For it is not

\*

———— Sed quid

*Non facient alii, cum tu multicia sumas,  
Cretice; et, hanc vestem populo mirante, perores  
In Proculus, et Pollineas? EST MÆCHA FABULLA.  
Damnetur, si vis, etiam Carfinia,— Sat. ii. 67—70.*

In these verses it is asserted, that *Fabulla* was an adulteress; and not only that, but it is plainly implied that there were some who did not condemn her as guilty of that crime. The acknowledgment that she *was* an adulteress, here made by *Laronia*, was obviously *not* expected by *Creticus*; which necessarily supposes that there were those who did not make that acknowledgment, but defended her, as being *unjustly* accused. These two circumstances agree remarkably with the character of *Paulina*, and bespeak her to be the same woman.

likely that this poet, amidst the vast variety of characters which he has noticed, should have suffered to pass unobserved a woman so celebrated as Hippias.

In the following epigram (Lib. i. 65.) Martial acknowledges the personal beauty and fortune of Fabulla; by which Fulvia, as Josephus attests, was much distinguished :

Bella es ; novimus : et puella ; verum est ;  
Et dives, quis enim potest negare ?  
Sed dum te nimium, FABULLA, laudas,  
Nec dives, neque bella, nec puella es.

Her extravagance and dissipation, together with her guilt in leaving her own husband, and going into Egypt with another man, for which she is reprobated by Juvenal, are implied and ridiculed in the following lines :

Ω Σωτου παῖ Κλινικου, Φαβυλλα,  
Λειφθεντος, Κλυτω εσπεται, ακοιτου,  
Και δουσ', ηδε φιλους' εχεις ασωτως. Lib. iv. 9.

All the point and wit which this paltry epigram possesses, rests entirely on the obscure resemblance subsisting between Σω-  
της, the name of her father, and the ad-  
verb ασωτως, inserted to mark her *profusion*.



It is here to be observed farther, that \* Κλυτος appears to me not to have been the proper name of the person with whom she went away, but an epithet expressive of his cha-

\* The epithet Κλυτος, here used, is well explained by the following application of it in *Homer* :

Και τότε πυρ ανεκαιε, και ημελγε ΚΑΤΤΑ Μηλα.

Od. I. 308.

This justifies the use of it in the succeeding lines of *Sophocles* :

Ενδ' ἔλικετσι βουσι και

ΚΑΤΤΟΙΣ πεσων αιπουλοις

Ερεμνον αιμα' εδευσα. A. M. 375.

Which is thus explained by the *Scholium* :

Κλυτα λεγει τα αιπουλια δια τας εν αυτοις παραχας και φωνας.

This leads me to rectify a glaring error, which has crept into a line preceding the above passage.

In the common editions we read thus :

———— Ενδ' ερειπιουσ

Νεκρων ερειφθεις ἔζετ' αρνειου φονου,

Κομηγ απριξ ουξι συλλαδων ΧΕΡΙ.

Which should be thus read and punctuated :

———— Ενδ' ερειπιουσ

Νεκρων ερειφθεις ἔζετ', αρνειου φονου,

Κομηγ απριξ ουξι συλλαδων, ΠΕΡΙ.

Id est, περι αρνειου φονου. A similar collocation may be seen in lines 804, 805, of the same play.

racter, as a devotee of the Egyptian divinities, who were noted for their *bleating* and *howling*, in seeking after *Apis*. Hence Juvenal, speaking of the attachment of this woman to the priests of Anubis, characterizes them in this manner :

Ergo hic præcipuum summumque meretur honorem,  
Qui grege linigero circumdatus, et grege calvo  
Plangentis populi currit derisor Anubis.

Sat. vi. 531—534.

Fulvia, as it appears from Juvenal, had fine hair, in which she much delighted. The same thing is intimated in the following epigram of Martial :

Jurat capillos esse, quos emit, suos  
Fabulla : numquid illa, Paulle, pejerat ? Ep. vi. 12.

Here we see an appeal made to one *Paulus*, whether or not Fabulla perjured herself in swearing that the hair which she had only bought, was her own ? Now, the force and point of this appeal consist, as appears to me, in her having actually perjured herself on a more serious subject ; that is, in having violated her fidelity to him. He must, therefore, have been either her husband or gal-

lant ; which circumstance accounts for her being called *Paulina*, which is easily formed from *Paullus*.

This person was, perhaps, a relation of *Æmilius Paulus* who was consul some few years before the Christian æra, and was concerned in demolishing the temple of Isis and Serapis, in the reign of Tiberius. This fact is related by *Valerius Maximus* in these words :

“ L. Æmilius Paulus consul, cum senatus Isidis et Serapidis fana diruenda censuisset, eaque nemo opificum attingere auderet, POSITÂ PRÆTEXTÂ, securim arripuit, templique ejus foribus inflixit.” *Ed. Var.* p. 41.

Observe, the author does not say that *Æmilius* pulled down the temple, *while* he was consul, but *after* he had laid down the consulship. An inattention to the force of *Valerius's* language has induced learned men to suppose that the event here related is different from the demolition of the temple of Isis, recorded by *Josephus*.

If this observation be just, we perceive the

reason why Æmilius Paulus should have taken an active part in the business. A favourite, or one that had been the wife of Paulus, his relation, was seduced by the priests of Isis: he therefore exerted his power to punish her devotees, and destroy her temple.

In the next epigram which Martial wrote on this woman, he ridicules her artifice in deceiving her husband, and his confidence in her chastity; both which may be inferred from her apologist Josephus, and from Juvenal, her bitterest accuser:

Qua mœchum ratione basiaret  
 Coram conjuge repperit Fabulla,  
 Parvum basiat usque morionem:  
 Hunc multis rapit osculis madentem  
 Mœchus protinus, et suis repletum  
 Ridenti dominæ statim remittit.  
 Quanto morio major est maritus!      Ep. xii. 96.

The Egyptian converts at Rome held, as we have already seen, their nocturnal festivals, in which prevailed those gross impurities that brought a scandal on the honoured name of *Christ*, and laid a foundation for the calumnies which ignorance and malice



extended indiscriminately to all his virtuous followers.

This circumstance, which distinguished Fulvia and her associates, is thus delineated by *Martial*:

Omnes aut vetulas habes amicas,  
Aut turpes, vetulisque fœdiore;  
Has ducis comites trahisque tecum  
PER CONVIVIA, PORTICUS, THEATRA :  
Sic formosa, Fabulla, sic puella es? Lib. viii. 79.

When Christianity was introduced into Rome, not only Paulina, but a vast multitude of other women, distinguished for their birth and fortune, received it. Respecting one of these, the malignity of Tacitus prompted him to write as follows :

“ In the same year the lust of the women was restrained by a severe decree of the senate, prohibiting any one from living by prostitution, whose grandfather, father, or husband, was a Roman knight ; for *Vistilia*, born of a noble family, had divulged among the ædiles the licentiousness of her conduct. But they did not punish her ; thinking that

a sufficient punishment was inflicted on the unchaste by the very nature of the prostitution which they professed. It was, however, demanded of *Titidius Labeo*, the husband of *Vistilia*, why he did not avail himself of the vengeance of the law against his wife, manifestly detected of such flagitiousness. And while he pretended that the sixty days, allowed him for inquiring into her conduct, were not yet expired, they decreed that the inquiry already made furnished sufficient evidence of her crime. And she absconded in the island of *Seriphos*; and a decree passed for the expulsion of the Jewish and Egyptian rites \*."

Now the women here spoken of, whose

\* "Eodem anno gravibus senatûs decretis libido fœminarum coercita; cautumque, ne quæstum corpore faceret, cui avus, aut pater, aut maritus, eques Romanus fuisset. Nam *Vistilia*, prætoriâ familiâ genita, licentiam stupri apud ædiles vulgaverat; more inter veteres recepto, qui satis pœnarum adversus impudicas in ipsâ professione flagitii credebant. Exactum et a *Titidio Labeone*, *Vistiliæ* marito, cur in uxore delicti manifestâ legis ultionem omisisset? Atque illo prætendente sexaginta dies ad consultandum datos necdum præterisse, satis visum de *Vistiliâ* statuisset. Eaque in insulam *Seriphon* abdita est. Actum et de sacris *Ægyptiis*, &c." Tacit. An. lib. ii. ad finem.

lust the senate endeavoured to check and correct by a new law, were *Roman matrons*, of rank and family, who had received the Gospel on its first introduction in Rome, and frequented the temple of Isis, where, it is to be feared, they were guilty of the enormities ascribed afterwards to the body of the Christians. Of this I need not give any formal proof; as it must appear very evident from the circumstance, that these women are connected by Tacitus with the Jewish and Egyptian converts banished from Italy.

Vistilia, we are here told, went, and absconded in the island of *Seriphos*, which lies in the *Ægean* sea. Now we may infer from *Juvenal*, that this was the very place into which some of the magicians were sent, when expelled from Rome. It cannot therefore be doubted, but that in company with these, and, perhaps, at their instigation, Vistilia repaired to that island. Nor is it improbable, that the famous Fulvia, who must have been in the number of the matrons proscribed by the senate, and who, as I have shewn, went with her new husband into Egypt, was one of the party. As he was an Egyptian, it was

natural to extend his journey from Seriphon to his own country, and to take her with him. Her circuitous route, over the different seas to Alexandria, is thus described by Juvenal:

Sed quanquam in magnis opibus, plumâque paternâ,  
Et segmentatis dormisset parvula cunis,  
Contempsit pelagus (famam contempserat olim,  
Cujus apud molles minima est jactura cathedras).  
Tyrrenos igitur fluctus, latèque sonantem  
Pertulit Iônium, constanti pectore, quamvis  
Mutandum toties esset mare. Sat. vi. 88—94.

From Tacitus then we infer the important fact, that the woman, whose seduction in the temple of Isis Josephus exhibits as the origin of the miraculous conception of Mary, was, after the detection of her crime, obliged, in company with other women, equally guilty, to flee the vengeance of the law; and that her new lover, as well as herself, left Rome, in consequence of the resentment of Tiberius.

It remains now to collect the several leading events brought to light in these sheets, and compare them, one after the other, with the contents of the two first chapters of the supposed Matthew.



1. *Certain magicians, who in name received the religion of Jesus, came to Rome, and there announced the birth of the Great King, whom the Jews expected to make his appearance in the world.*

“ Now, after Jesus was born at Bethlehem in Judæa, in the days of Herod the king, behold ! there came magi of the East to Jerusalem, saying, ‘ Where is the infant king of the Jews ? for we have seen his star rise, and are come to pay him homage.’ ”

2. *The news of this event spread rapidly throughout the city, and filled the emperor with alarm, and the senate with indignation.*

“ When Herod heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.”

3. *Tiberius, on hearing of this report, sent for Thaumās, and the other philologers, and made minute inquiries of them, who this great Pan (or Lord of All) was ?*

“ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and the scribes of the people toge-

ther, he asked them, ‘ Where this Christ might be born ? ’”

4. *To prove that Jesus Christ was the great temporal prince whom the Jews expected to be born in Bethlehem of Judæa, the philologers forged certain oracles, which they ascribed to the Sibyl, pretending to foretell that he should be born in that place.*

“ And they said unto him, ‘ At Bethlehem, in Judæa ; for thus it is written by the prophet.’ ”

5. *Tiberius, alarmed at the progress of the new faith, as thinking it hostile to his person and government, and exasperated too by the tumults which it excited in the city, put to death a great number of its professors, who themselves were but BABES in respect to the spiritual knowledge of it ; while the rest he banished from the coasts.*

“ Then Herod, when he saw himself mocked by the magi, was greatly enraged ; and sent and slew all the children in

Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had learned exactly of the magi."

*6. Paulina went to the temple of Isis with the intention of gratifying the lust of the impure Anubis; but, instead of the god, she received a man into her arms.*

"After his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit."

*7. Paulina and her new husband left Rome in consequence of the resentment of Tiberius and the senate; and, warned in a dream by the goddess Isis, they went into Egypt.*

"An angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, and take with thee the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be there till I bring thee word; for Herod is about to seek the child, to destroy him.'"

*s. Soon after the death of Tiberius, Paulina, with others of the Christian societies, returns from Egypt, and again settles in Rome.*

“ And when Herod was dead, behold ! an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ‘ Arise, and take with thee the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel ; for they are dead who were seeking the child’s life.’ So he arose, and took with him the child and his mother, and went towards the land of Israel.”

But in order to convince every candid inquirer, that this narrative of the reputed Matthew is a forgery, founded on the transactions in Rome, I will next shew, that the events related in these chapters are utterly incompatible with the known circumstances of the Jews in the time of our Lord, and therefore could never have happened in Judæa.

In order to do this with certainty and effect, it is necessary to transcribe once more the whole narrative, and examine it by separate paragraphs.



“ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise : When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.”

In this clause two things are plainly implied ; first, that Joseph, had Mary been with child in consequence of adultery with some other man, would have been *unjust*, or, in other words, would have violated the law, if, after the discovery, he married her ; secondly, that it was in his power to expose her to *public shame*, or, as the original term, *παράδειγματισαι*, more exactly imports, *to deliver her up to public justice, or capital punishment* ; and it was owing to his clemency that he did not thus punish her.

Now it is contended that both these implications are *false*, as being contradictory to the Jewish laws and customs. In proof of this, I will cite the words of the *second law* : “ —When a man hath taken a wife, and mar-

ried her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house \*."

Here the law *expressly permitted* Joseph to retain Mary, if *she pleased him*, or if *she found favour in his eyes*. Could he then have been deemed *unjust* for doing what the law permitted? But this is not all. Joseph, so far from being lenient in not punishing his wife, *could not* have done this had he been so inclined; for his inclination in this respect the law plainly restrained, and sheltered Mary from punishment by only giving her a bill of divorcement, and sending her out of his house. This is confirmed, if confirmation be necessary, by the authority of *Lightfoot*. "So far," says he, "was the law mollified, that I say not weakened, by the law of giving a bill of divorce, that the husband might not only pardon his adulterous wife, and not compel her to appear before the Sanhedrim;

\* Deuter. xxiv. 1.

*but scarcely could, if he would, put her to death \*."*

And not only the law of Moses, but also the prevailing customs of the Jews, allowed Joseph either to put away, or marry his wife, without the imputation of *injustice*. Instances, which justify this assertion, occur in many places of the New Testament.

"It had been said," declares our Lord, "by them of old, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the sake of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." Is it not hence very evident, that the Jews, whom our Lord addressed, did, without the charge of violating the law, not only divorce their wives for the sake of fornication, but also for reasons less weighty? "This appears also," says Lardner, "from the questions put to him concerning this matter, and the an-

\* See Lightfoot, in loc.

swers our Lord gave to them, and the surprise and uneasiness which the disciples express at his decisions, when he forbade such licentious divorces as those made for every cause.—Justin Martyr, about the middle of the second century, says, that to that very day their rabbies permitted them to have each man four or five wives; and that wherever they were, they conversed with as many women as they pleased, and that, under the notion of marriage \*.”

Is it not from all this very manifest, that Joseph might have divorced his wife in case of adultery, without violating the laws, or offending the prejudices of the Jewish people?

The relation then of the supposed Evangelist, as it respects Joseph and Mary, cannot be true; but, on the contrary, is strictly so, in reference to *Titidius* and *Vistilia* in Rome. This woman, we have seen, had transgressed the laws by the most flagitious debauchery. Her husband connived at her guilt; the rigour of justice was demanded

\* Vol. i. p. 37.



against them by the senate, and they were obliged to flee their country.

“ But after he had been thinking on these things, behold ! an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, ‘ Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife ; for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit.’ ”

That an angel might appear to Joseph in a dream is not impossible ; but it is contrary to probability, and therefore is a fact which requires very strong and unequivocal evidence to render it credible. But the evidence here offered is the most *equivocal* that can well be conceived. Joseph is not informed of the pregnancy of his wife *till* he had reason to suspect her of adultery. The angel appears to him in the usual manner in which Isis was said to appear to her priests. The angel, too, endeavours to persuade him that Mary was with child, not by a man, but by the Holy Spirit ; the very way, we are led to think, in which the messenger of Anubis, who brought his wife the honorable invitation, accosted Saturninus :—“ Fear not, Sa-

turninus, to let thy wife go ; for it is not any man, but the *holy* Anubis, that is in love with her." Finally, in his address to Joseph, the angel not only calls him by his name, but distinguishes him *as the descendant of David*. Is such an address consonant to the language of a messenger sent from God, who must have been free from human vanity ; or to the pride of a Jew, who wished to *inform* the people whom he was deceiving, and who were strangers to the parents of our Lord, that he sprang from a royal extraction \* ?

" And she will bring forth a son, and thou shalt call him *JESUS* ; for he will save them from their sins. Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ' Behold ! a Virgin will be with child, and will bring forth a son, and he will be called *Emanuel*, which means *God with us*.' "

\* Zonaras has copied from Josephus the narrative of Paulina's adultery, and related it nearly in his words. He mentions, however, one circumstance omitted by the Jewish historian ; namely, that the priest of Anubis, who brought the invitation to Paulina, applied to her husband, in order to obtain his consent. The husband consented, we are told, from the confidence he had in her chastity :—" Καὶ τῷ ἀνδρὶ κινῶνται τὸ ἀγγελεῖν, καὶ ἐκεῖνος συνεχώρει τὴν σωφροσύνην τῆς γυναῖκος γνωσκῶν." Zonar. An. vol. i. p. 268. D.

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The impious perversions of the prophecies, which occur in this place, and in the next chapter, I shall not particularly dwell upon. Their misapplication has again and again been demonstrated; so that the most intelligent advocates of this wild tale are brought to confess that they are only *accommodations*.

“ *Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ‘Behold! a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son.’—* The deceivers were aware that the reader might put the question, What end is answered by this strange event? In order to obviate it, they quote from Isaiah the above prediction, which, as is well known, refers to *Hezekiah*; and that they might meet the question in its full extent, they plunge themselves into an abyss of absurdity. “All this,” say they, “was done, that it might be fulfilled.”

The events gone before, which are *included* in the term *all*, are these:—Mary is with child by the Holy Spirit; Joseph suspects her of adultery, and determines to put her

away privily, but is afterwards prevented by an angel appearing to remove his suspicion. And *all these*, it seems, are accomplished by the prophecy, that a young woman should conceive and bear a son \* !

The words of the prophet, in their original import, respect *Abaz*; assuring him “ that he should have a son, and that before this child knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land, by whose two kings thou

\* In proof that *virgo* may mean a married young woman, it is easy to produce many instances. I shall, however, content myself with the following from Horace, lib. ii. od. 8.

Te senes parci, miseræque nuper  
*Virgines nuptæ*, tua ne retardet  
 Aura maritos.

The last clause of these lines, which is rather obscure, may be illustrated by a similar expression of *Philo Judæus*, in his book *De Mercede Meretricis*. They are words put in the mouth of *Happiness*, addressing the deluded votary of *Pleasure*.—“ Τας αλλας νοσους και κηρας εαυτης ουκ εμηνυσεν, αἰς εἰς αναγκης, εκεινην αιρουμενος, χρηση, ινα, ΑΤΡΑΤΙΝΟΣ ωφελειας παρθεις, εντος ασκυων λειφθης.” Vol. ii. p. 268. *Ed. Man.*

It is here proper to remark, that the Jews, from the beginning, maintained, that the corresponding Hebrew word signified in this place not a *virgin*, but a *young woman*. See *Origen con. Cels.* p. 27.

art straightened, will be forsaken." As to the primary application, then, of this prediction, we cannot doubt, but that it respects *Hezekiah*. "But," say the advocates of the miraculous conception, "it bears a *secondary reference* to Christ." If this be the case, permit me to ask, How can a prophecy, which in its original application foretells, that a child should be born *by means* of a natural father, in its secondary sense be taken to foretell, that Jesus should be conceived *without* a natural father?

"Thou shalt call his name," says the angel, "*Jesus*, in order to fulfil the prophecy, and thou shalt call his name *Emanuel*." Our Saviour then was called *Jesus*, because it had been foretold that he should be named *Emanuel*! Is this the reasoning of an angel, or the base artifice of a forger, who sought to justify his deception by remote *analogies*?

The angel gives Joseph the interpretation of that word, and tells him that it signifies *God with us*. He must, therefore, have been aware, that Joseph, a *Hebrew*, did not know

the *Hebrew tongue* ! A forger, indeed, writing among a people ignorant of it, might justly entertain such an apprehension, and therefore interpret its meaning \*.

“ Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife ; and knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son ; and he called his name Jesus.”

The fabricators of the story were aware, that as Mary became pregnant after her espousal to Joseph, she must have been made so by him. In order, therefore, to give some colour of probability to their fiction, that she had conceived by the Holy Spirit, and not by her husband, they said that she had no children *afterwards*, and that the brethren of our Lord were the offspring of Joseph by a for-

\* The evangelists, Mark, Luke, and John, as they wrote among *Gentiles*, and for the use of Gentile converts, who, of course, were ignorant of the *Hebrew tongue*, explain the meaning of such terms in that language as they had occasion to employ ; whereas *Matthew*, who composed his Gospel for the *Jewish* Christians, has not, if I recollect rightly, done this in a single instance. See Mark, v. 41. John, iv. 25.



*mer* wife ; and this opinion was transmitted down by them, and has been believed by all denominations of Christians to this day.

It is an opinion, however, overthrown in the above paragraph ; which shews that the sagacity of its authors was not equal to their FRAUD. Jesus is styled the *first-born* of Mary, who must therefore have had children born *after* him. The *only* child of a mother has never yet been called her FIRST-BORN.

Our deceivers seem farther to have thought, that it would have been *criminal* in Joseph to cohabit with his wife *till* her DELIVERY. To exculpate him from this crime, they tell us that “ *he did not know* her until she had brought forth her first-born.” The superstitious notion here alluded to is surely of the rankest kind, and clearly betrays the impure fountain whence it flowed.

Juvenal, having said that Isis, as she pretended, conversed with Paulina, or some other female devotee, in her dreams, proceeds thus in his description :

Ergo hic præcipuum summumque meretur honorem,  
 Qui grege linigero circumdatus, et grege calvo,  
 Plangentis populi currit derisor Anubis.  
 Ille petit veniam, *quoties non abstinet uxor*  
*Concubitu, sacris observandisque diebus :*  
 Magnaque debetur violato pœna cadurco :  
 Et movisse caput visa est argentea serpens.  
 Illius lacrymæ meditataque murmura præstant,  
 Ut veniam culpæ non abnuat, ansere magno  
 Scilicet et tenui popano corruptus Osiris.

Sat. vi. 531—540.

On this passage Salmasius has the following note, translated by Mr. Owen : “ The female devotees of Isis kept nine days sacred in honour of the goddess. *Cadurcum* was the bed on which they lay within the temple every night, during the festival, to avoid all commerce with their husbands—a heinous sin ! it seems, which nothing but a good bribe to *Osiris*, that is, to his priests, could expiate.”

“ Now, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the king, behold ! there came magi from the East to Jerusalem, saying, ‘ Where is he that is born king of the Jews ? For we have seen his star in the East, and we are come to worship him.’ ”

That all this fiction is founded upon the events which are shewn to have taken place at Rome, will farther appear from the following considerations :

The magi here spoken of, to whom ignorance and fraud have given the appellation of *wise men*, could, in reality, have no knowledge of the birth of our Lord ; because the whole system of *astrology*, from which this knowledge is pretended to have been derived, is discovered, by the progress of reason and natural philosophy, to be a gross deception. But a preternatural appearance \*, it will be said, in the form of a star, might have given them this information.

\* This supposition is made by Origen. “ *Stellam*,” says he, “ *quæ in Oriente visa est, novam fuisse opinamur, nec ulli ex istis notis similem, quæ vel in firmamento sunt, vel in orbibus inferioribus : sed ejus generis quales cometæ visuntur temporanei, Docides, Pogoniæ, Pithi, aut quomodocunque libet Græcis variis nominibus signare horum differentes figuras.*” *Orig. con. Cels.* p. 45.

The words of the author of the *Epitome*, annexed to the work of Clement, deserve here to be quoted :—“ *Ανατείλει ξενος αστηρ και καινος καταλυν την παλαιαν αστροβητιαν, καινω φωτι, ου κοσμικω, λαμπομενος, ο καινας οδους και σωτηριας τρεπομενος.*” *Clem. Alex.* p. 800.

The possibility of this supposition I do not deny. But surely it is altogether incredible, that the Almighty should have suspended the laws of nature, in order to sanction an art quite contrary to truth and reason. What renders this supposition still more improbable, is the *acknowledged depravity* of all the astrologers of every nation and every description\*.

Would the God of purity give a supernatural communication to the most filthy and flagitious of the heathens? But the consideration which, beyond all others, proves that such men received from God no intimation of the Messiah's birth, is their being pointed out to the Jews in the Old Testament as per-

\* " Quid ergo," says Tertullian, " dicemus magiam? Quod omnes pene *fallaciam*—*multiformem lucem* mentis humanæ, totius erroris *artificem*, salutis pariter animæque *vastatricem*; secundæ scilicet idololatriæ, in qua se dæmones perinde mortuos fingunt." P. 305.

The magi are ever classed by the Fathers among the vilest of the human race. See Ter. p. 90, 558. See too an instance of their great depravity, mentioned by Clemens Alex. p. 431.



sons that were to be excluded from among them.

“ There shall not be found among you,” says Moses, “ one that useth divination, or AN OBSERVER OF TIMES, or an enchanter, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.” By *an observer of times*, in this passage, is meant the *astrologer*, who calculated time from the course of the stars, and pretended to unfold future events from their several aspects.

The prophet Isaiah complains to the Almighty that he had forsaken the house of Jacob, because they entertained among them and gave attention to the teachers of astrology. “ Verily, thou hast abandoned thy people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with DIVINERS FROM THE EAST, AND WITH SOOTHSAYERS, LIKE THE PHILISTINES \*.”

Such is the representation which is given throughout the whole Bible of those who,

\* *Lowth's Trans.* chap. ii. 6.

from whatever country, practised the magical arts; and is it credible that the immutable God should have afforded an extraordinary communication to men who were the object of his abhorrence?

If the magi came to Jerusalem in the manner here stated, the object of their coming must have been to prepare the Jewish nation for receiving their Messiah. But this object must necessarily have been ineffectual: for the Jews, as they had been taught by Moses and the prophets, abominated them as impostors and idolators. They would not, therefore, have given them any credit, though they had announced the truth.

Jesus, if he had at his birth been thus publicly pointed out as the king of the Jews, must ever after have been regarded in this light by the people at large; and this idea of him would, in a particular manner, have been cherished by his family and followers. But, from the whole of his history, it is manifest that such an honorable notion was entertained by neither his friends nor enemies. Till a late period in his ministry, his claim

to the Messiahship was not an object of hope to the one, nor of dread to the other party.

The wisdom of God, as appears from the four Gospels, judged it proper, that Jesus should not be known to be the Christ, till he had established the truth of this by his miracles, and particularly by his resurrection.

With the divine wisdom, in this respect, the discovery, and the annunciation of his being the Messiah at his birth, would have been palpably inconsistent. Such a discovery, therefore, as is here represented, was, in truth, never made.

The title, which in the original is "the *born* king of the Jews," given our Lord by the magi, bears an opposition to *Herod*, who had been *made* king of the Jews by the senate. Now this opposition supposes two things : first, that the title of Herod was *familiar* to the magi, which could have been the case only with Jews in Rome or in Judæa, and not with men that came from a distant country : secondly, that Jesus was king of the Jews in the same sense in which Herod

was ; or, in other words, that he was a *temporal* prince. But this doctrine could never have come from God, nor have been intimated by Matthew, but by some early Jew, who mistook the nature of the Messiah's kingdom.

From the words, " we have seen his star in the East," which the magi made use of, it is manifest that such men never came from the east of *Jerusalem*, but from the east of *Rome*. For if they were in the east of *Jerusalem*, the star, before it could have directed them to that city, must have appeared in the *west* : if, on the contrary, they stood in the west of it, the star appearing in the East directly pointed towards *Judæa*. It follows, therefore, that while the magi pretended to be eastward, they were, in reality, *westward* of *Jerusalem* ; that is, at *Rome*, as has been already *shewn*.

" When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all *Jerusalem* with him : and when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people toge-



ther, he demanded of them, Where Christ should be born?"

That the events here spoken of; namely, that certain men from the East brought to Rome the news of the Messiah; that the city was in consequence thrown into commotion; that *Tiberius* was alarmed, and assembled the magicians, in order to be informed respecting Jesus;—that all these occurrences happened there, we have already seen;—that they do not agree with the circumstances of Jerusalem, will appear from the following remarks:

The above paragraph implies that Herod and the inhabitants of Jerusalem gave credit to the news concerning the Messiah's birth, brought by the magi. But this is an implication absolutely false, because the Jewish people have, in general, regarded the whole system of astrology as *vain deceit*.

When the news of our Saviour's resurrection, which proved him to be the Messiah, was carried to Rome, it was natural for Ti-

berius, who did not understand the nature of his kingdom, to be alarmed, and for the tranquillity of the city to be disturbed: but is it credible that the birth of a *child*, who had neither family nor fortune to support his claim, should have occasioned any apprehension in Herod, and have created disturbance throughout Jerusalem?

It is asserted in this clause, that the Jewish rulers, as well as the king, were *troubled* by the information of the magi. That it occasioned trouble to Herod is what might be expected; but to the priests and the people at large it must have been a matter of the greatest joy. On the contrary, the magistrates and the inhabitants of Rome naturally shared in this alarm with the emperor.

Herod, who had been born and educated among the Jews, and of course acquainted with their opinions and customs, must have well known where their expected Messiah should be born\*. He had, therefore, no

\* This observation must appear more obviously just, if, as is most probable, what Origen asserts was true.—“The chief priests and scribes,” says he, “publicly taught, *before the*

need to inquire of the Scribes and Pharisees the place where, according to the mistaken opinion of the Jews, he was to receive his birth. On the other hand, it was reasonable that Tiberius, who, from his distant situation, was a total stranger to the Jews and their expectations, should make the inquiry here mentioned.

“ And they said unto him : In Bethlehem of Judæa ; for thus it is written by the prophet :—‘ And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah ; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.’ ”

Now let us suppose, that Herod, as is said in the above paragraph, did assemble the Scribes and Pharisees, and demanded of them the place of our Saviour's birth. What reply, let me ask, was it natural for them to make to the question ? As they were *on the*

advent of Christ, that he was to be born at Bethlehem.”  
*Orig. con. Cels.* p. 139.

What was thus *publicly* taught by the priests could not have been unknown to Herod ; so that an inquiry on the subject must have been unnecessary.

*spot*, they would most assuredly have answered, "He is to be born *in Bethlehem*:" or, perhaps, their national pride might have led them to add, "*Bethlehem, the city of David*."

When Tiberius, as has been shewn, made the same, or similar inquiry, was the same precise answer likely to be given to him?—No. The *great distance* of the emperor from Bethlehem rendered it necessary to subjoin the name of *the country* which included it, and which was well known in remote regions: accordingly, this is the reply which the chief-priests are said to have returned:—"And they said unto him: In Bethlehem, of JUDÆA."

But the principal circumstance which proves that this inquiry was made in reality by Tiberius, and not by Herod, is the remarkable changes introduced into this prophecy, which evidently suppose that it was cited in some country *very remote* from Judæa. To shew what I mean, it is necessary to quote the prediction as it stands in Micah, which is thus rendered in the common translation:



—“ But thou Bethlehem *Ephratah*, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall *he* come forth, that is to be ruler in Israel.” Between this, and the quotation of it, in the supposed Matthew, there are three remarkable differences; for *Ephratah*, in the former, the latter substituted “ land of Judah,” or, as it was written in the time of Jerom, which, no doubt, was the true reading, “ land of Judæa.” And why this substitution? Why should not the words of the prophet have been faithfully preserved? The Jews, as is well known, were scrupulous, even to excess, about their sacred writings. Scarcely would they, at any time, correct, much less would they introduce, any error into their Scriptures. The authors of these chapters must, therefore, have some strong inducement, before they could make any alteration. The forgery of the miraculous conception at Rome unfolds this reason for it :

*Ephratah*, being the name of a little province, including Bethlehem, and used by Micah to distinguish it from Bethlehem in Galilee, was not sufficiently *comprehensive* to

be known in a distant place. The forgers, therefore, in order to specify with exactness the spot which gave Jesus birth, were obliged to annex, not, as the prophet did, the name of the *province*, but of the *country*, in which Bethlehem was situated. A familiar example will render my meaning obvious, and place in a proper light the force of my argument. Suppose that it were asked me, Where was *Sir Joshua Reynolds born*?—if this question were proposed in any part of England, or of Great Britain, where Devonshire is well known, Sir Joshua, I should reply, was born at *Plympton*, in *Devonshire*. But if the same query should be put to me at *Rome*, where this county is generally unknown, my reply *then* would be, He was born at *Plympton*, in *England*. The change, therefore, of *Ephrath* for *land of Judæa*, demonstrates the forgery to have taken place very far from that country, where the name of a province in it was not well known.

In the original prophecy we farther read, “Though thou be little among the thousands of Judah :” but the citation has, “And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judæa, art *not* the

least." In the clause thus altered, the forgers insinuate, that Bethlehem was one of the most renowned cities in Judæa. Their object was to remove an objection made by mistaken pride against our Lord, namely, that a character so exalted as the Messiah should have been born in a little village. *Celsus* reproaches him as being poor, and as receiving his birth from so mean a place as Bethlehem\*.

Lastly : Whilst Micah only says, " Out of thee shall *he* come ;" the reputed Matthew has, " Out of thee shall come a *governor*." It was fully understood among the Jews, that by *he* was meant the Messiah, whom they were expecting. If, therefore, the authors of this story wrote to *them*, they had no need to explain the *pronoun*, or to substitute its equivalent. On the contrary, as they wrote among Gentiles, who were strangers to the language and expectations of the Jews, it was requisite, in order to be comprehended, to insert the *name* for *he*, its representative †.

\* "Κελσός," says Origen, "ονειδίζει τῷ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ ἐκ κοίτης αὐτοῦ γεγενῆσθαι Ἰουδαίᾳς." P. 22.

† An apposite instance, to illustrate the truth of this observation, is the following, which I take from *Cicero*, *De*

But, what is most worthy of observation, the substituted name means a *temporal* ruler, and is not applied elsewhere in the New Testament to Jesus Christ, but always signifies an earthly prince ; and this proves, what I have already observed, that the writers of these chapters did not understand the nature of the Messiah's kingdom. What is still more so, the original of *governor* seems to have been the very term which Tiberius used concerning *Galba*, when he predicted his rising to the empire of Rome. The similarity of the language into which the prophecy of Micah is changed, to that employed by Josephus, respecting the emperor, is so very striking, that I shall lay both passages before the reader in the original.

The words of the supposed Evangelist are these :—" Ουδαμως ελαχιστη ει εν τοις 'ΗΓΕ-  
ΜΟΣΙΝ Ιουδα· εκ σου γαρ εξελευσεται 'ΗΓΟΥ-

*Natura Deorum.*—" Nec vero probare soleo id, quod de Pythagoreis accepimus, quos ferunt, si quid affirmarent in disputando, cum ex iis quæreretur, quare ita esset, respondere solitos—IPSE dixit." *Ipsè*, thus used by those philosophers, was well known to mean *Pythagoras* ; but this was not so evident to a *Roman* reader. Cicero, therefore, subjoins an explanation of it—IPSE autem erat Pythagoras. Lib. i. 5.



MENOS.” Those of Josephus are the following :—“ Γαλβαν ουν ποτε θεασαμενος ὡς αὐτον εισιοντα (Tiberius), φησι προς τους επιτηδειοτατους αὐτω, ὡς παραγενοιο αὐνη τη Ῥωμαιαν ποτε τιμησομενος ἙΓΕΜΟΝΙΑ. Τα τε παντα μαντειων ὅποσα εχομενα πιθανα ἙΓΟΤΜΕΝΟΣ ἙΓΕΜΟΝΩΝ μαλιστα αὐνη οὗτος, ὑπο του επαληθευοντος αὐτων επι τοις πραγμασιν εχρητο αὐταις \*.” To this Reland subjoins this remark —“ *Nota quod Imperatores Ἑγεμονες dicantur.*”

That the forgers might copy the language of Tiberius, which proved a true prediction, in order by that means to recommend the prophecy of Micah, is not improbable. Be this, however, as it may, it is certain that Matthew never gave our Lord an appellation appropriate to the Roman emperors.

“ Then Herod, when he had privily called the magi, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, ‘ Go, and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that

\* Antiq. Jud. vol. i. p. 894.

I may come and worship him also.' And when they had heard the king, they departed ; and, lo ! the star, which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

On this paragraph I have already made one remark. I shall here only express my regret and astonishment, that a fiction, which the plainest observations demonstrate to be an impudent and absurd falsehood; should have been incorporated with the pure and simple religion of Jesus, and thereby expose it to the contempt and derision of thinking men. A star, which philosophy teaches to be incomparably greater than our world, and to be immensely more distant than the sun, came, and stood above the top of the house where Jesus was born ! Whilst a fiction, wild and bare-faced like this, is made, by fraud and ignorance, the foundation of Christianity, can we wonder at the prevalence of infidelity ?

" When they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his

mother, and fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold and frankincense, and myrrh."

That the forgers of the miraculous conception supposed our Lord to be a temporal prince, has already been noticed, and proved from two instances. In the last paragraph we have a still farther confirmation of this fact. The magi, we are here told, brought our Lord some presents, fell down before him, and worshipped him, or paid him homage. These acts imply, that he was, in their opinion, such a personage as usually received these marks of respect in Eastern countries; and such personages, it is well known, were *princes and sovereigns* \*.

\* "The people of the East," says Mr. Wakefield, "never approached the presence of kings, and great personages, without a present in their hands. This custom is taken notice of several times in the Old Testament. See Gen. xliii. 11. 2 Kings, v. 5, &c. and still prevails in the East, and some of the newly discovered islands in the South Seas.

The following story proves, how invariably this token of respect was observed: As Artaxerxes, king of Persia, was going along the road, he was suddenly met by a man of a mean condition; who being afraid to approach him without an of-

The nature of the gifts which are said to have been offered to him evinces that such gifts had never, in reality, been offered. They are looked upon by the Fathers, who were very good judges (for they were the genuine disciples of those who fabricated this account), as carrying a *typical* reference to our Lord's death and resurrection; the gold denoting the extent and perpetuity of his kingdom, whilst the myrrh and frankincense presignify his sufferings\*.

fering, took up some WATER out of a river in both his hands, and presented it to the king—In conformity to this general practice, the magi present some of the choicest produce of their country." *Com. on Matt. in loco.*

\* "Το," says Origen, "φεροντες μεν δωρα, α, ινα ουτως νομαζω συνθετω τινι εκ θεσ και ανθρωπου θνητου, προσηγεγκαν συμβολα μεν, ως βασιλει τον χρυσον, ως δε τεθνηξομενω την σμυρναν, ως δε θεω λιβανωντον." P. 46. See also *Clemens Alexandrinus*, p. 176.

The fact, however, seems to be, that this fiction is founded upon the Egyptian mythology respecting *Osiris*. The paragraph to which I allude, and from which this account appears to have been borrowed, deserves to be transcribed from *Plutarch*. It is thus rendered by *Squire*.—"And, indeed, so great is the veneration which they pay this luminary, and so willing are they to render him kind and propitious to them, that three times every day do they burn or offer incense to him; resin, at his first rising; myrrh, when he was in the meridian; and a mixture, called *kupbi*, at the time of his setting."



//  
• The magi then foresaw that Jesus was to suffer, and to rise from the dead.—Truths which were hidden from his own disciples till they actually took place !

“ And being warned of God in a dream, that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. And when they were departed, behold ! the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, ‘ Arise, and take the young child, and his mother, and flee into Egypt. And be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child, to destroy him.’ When he arose, he took the young child, and his mother, by night, and departed into Egypt. And was there until the death of Herod : that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord, by the pro-

What renders this passage most worthy of notice is, the circumstance already pointed out, that the Egyptian converts supposed *Jesus Christ* to be the same with *Osiris*, whom Plutarch here maintains to be the same with the *sun*. See his book concerning *Osiris*, sect. 52.

The resin, myrrh, and kuphi, which the Egyptian offered to this divinity, like the gifts of the magi, bore a symbolical signification. See the *last section* of the same book.

phet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son."

If the magi here mentioned had announced the birth of Jesus, and believed in him as the Messiah of the Jews, they must have been *Christians*; and it is natural to suppose, that when they departed, to avoid the anger of Herod, they went off in company with Joseph and Mary; and this appears plain from the context. The author, on saying, that they retired into their own country, breaks off the narrative concerning them, and relates the departure of our Lord and his parents. We may conclude, therefore, that they went together, and must all have gone into Egypt. Here the story coincides, and is the very same with that of Paulina, who left Rome, in conjunction with the Egyptian converts, and withdrew into that country.

"Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the magi," respecting the time of the star, which he had diligently inquired of them, "was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and all the coasts thereof, from two

years old, and under. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning ; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not."

Without dwelling upon the unaccountable, and therefore incredible, folly and cruelty here imputed to Herod, nor upon the silence of those early historians who had opportunity to know, and inclination to relate, such a deed, if it were true ; there are two circumstances which sufficiently expose the falsehood of this account.

It appears from the above clause, when its members are properly connected, that Herod was *deceived* by the magi in respect to the star, which indicated the birth of Jesus, and that this deception was the real cause of his anger. Now this seems one of the reasons for which Tiberius became enraged with the Christian magi at Rome, and banished them from the city.

This relation, if true, supposes that Joseph and Mary were inhabitants of *Bethlehem*; at least that they lived there for the space of two years; either of which is a false supposition.

This foregoing narrative asserts, that Herod "slew *all* the children in Bethlehem, and in *all the coasts* thereof, from two years old, and under." This account is faithfully copied, from the manner in which Tiberius treated the Christians at Rome. "The Jewish youth," says Suetonius, "he distributed into islands of a severe climate." "Those that were of a *proper age*," relates Tacitus, "the emperor sent into the island of Sardinia." "And," according to Josephus, "such as refused to be enlisted, were put to death." And each of these historians represent them as banished from *all the coasts*.

The unprovoked butchery of the children by Herod, the forgers were aware would appear to all a very incredible event. They therefore represent it as the fulfilment of a prophecy, which refers, when attended to, not to a *future*, but a *past* event. The verse in Jeremiah being not a prediction, but an



*accommodation*, was brought to the recollection of the writer by *association*, excited by the similarity of the events in the two places, and particularly by the names *Roma* and *Rama* being nearly the same.

“ But when Herod was dead, behold ! an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ‘ Arise, and take the young child, and his mother, and go into the land of Israel : for they are dead which sought the young child’s life.’ And he arose, and took the young child, and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither ; notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called *Nazareth*, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets : He shall be called a *Nazarene*.”

“ *They are dead.*”—Some others, it seems, besides Herod, sought the life of the child. None at Jerusalem could have sought it ; for the chief-priests and scribes were not yet dis-

appointed in him. They would not, therefore, have wished him to be put to death, but the reverse, if they had any notion of his being the Messiah. At Rome, on the contrary, many, besides the emperor, desired the life of Paulina and the magi.

Joseph, says the story, was afraid to return *thither*, or *there*, that is, to Judæa. From this it is plain, that the forgers at the time of writing it were not in *that country*; for no man yet applied the adverb *there* to the place where he himself resided. This will be illustrated by an example.—A person in England may say of another that went to *France* or *America*, he returned *thither*. But if he himself, at the time he spoke this, were resident in either of those places, he would then say, he returned *here*.

I shall conclude this proposition with proving, from a comparison of Luke and Josephus, that our Lord was not born in the days of Herod the king.

In the account which we have examined, it is said that Herod killed all the children from

two years old, and under. From this we may infer, that Jesus was two years of age when he was conveyed into Egypt. There he was commanded to stay till the death of Herod. Now we cannot suppose, that this event took place immediately ; else why was he sent to a country so distant, to avoid the anger of Herod, if he was soon to die ? Jesus, therefore, must have been some time in Egypt before the death of that king. The author of the *Gospel of our Saviour's infancy* makes his continuance there to be *three years*. Lest this be thought too much, let it be limited to two. Our Lord then, when Herod died, was four years of age. When that event took place, *Philip*, the son of Herod, became tetrach of Trachonitis, which, with the two provinces of Batanea and Gaulanitis, he governed *thirty-seven years*. This, his last year, was, as we learn from Josephus, the *twentieth of the reign of Tiberius* \* ; the thirty-se-

\* This testimony of Josephus on this point is express ; and as the thirty-seven years which Philip reigned are expressed not in figures, but at full length, it is liable to no mistake.—

“ Τότε μὲν Φίλιππος, Ἡρώδης δὲ ἦν ἀδελφός, τελευτᾷ τὸν βίον, εἰκοστῷ μὲν ἐνιαυτῷ τῆς Τιβερίου ἀρχῆς, ἡγήσασθαι μὲν δὲ αὐτὸς ἑπτὰ καὶ τριακοντα,” &c. *Antig. Jud.* lib. xviii. cap. 5. sect. 6.

cond of his government must, therefore, have been the fifteenth of that emperor.

But Jesus was born, as we have seen, four years before the death of Herod, and, of course, before Philip was made governor. Our Lord then, according to this calculation, was *thirty-six* years old in the fifteenth of Tiberius. But the evangelist Luke says expressly, that he then began to be about *thirty-five years of age*; consequently Jesus was not born till about *two years after* the death of Herod the Great.

As it is of importance to prove this point beyond the possibility of doubt, I will lead the reader to the above conclusion in another way. Our Evangelist affirms, that Jesus was thirty years old the fifteenth of Tiberius. The fifteenth of Tiberius, if Josephus is to be relied upon, was the *thirty-second* of Philip. Our Lord then was *thirty*, the *thirty-second* of that tetrach. He must, therefore, have been born two years *after* his government had commenced; that is, two years after the death of his father Herod.



This may be demonstrated in a manner still different. According to the received computation, Augustus died in the year of Rome 767; Herod in the year 750. The former then survived the latter *seventeen years*. And this precisely agrees with the statement of Josephus, which supposes that the tetrarchy of Philip, who succeeded Herod, commenced seventeen years before the accession of *Tiberius*. Now, as Augustus, after the defeat of Antony, reigned forty-four years, and survived Herod ~~seventeen~~, Herod's death took place the twenty-seventh of his reign. But, according to Luke, who says that Jesus was thirty the fifteenth of Tiberius, his birth must have preceded the decease of Augustus by fifteen years; which, taken from forty-four, leaves *twenty-nine*. Herod then died in the twenty-seventh, and Jesus was born the twenty-ninth of the reign of Augustus; that is, the death of Herod the Great, or the succession of his son Philip, preceded the nativity of our Lord *two years*.

I propose in the next place to prove, *that, from the tenor of the four Gospels, our Lord*

*appears to have been universally supposed by his mother, his brethren, his disciples, as well as the Jews at large, to be the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary, and a native of Nazareth.*

And here I beg leave to premise an observation worthy of notice, viz. that the supposed birth of Jesus at Bethlehem is an essential branch of the doctrine of the miraculous conception. If then this branch of it be demonstrated to be false, it follows, of course, that the whole story is equally false : if, on the other hand, it be proved, that Jesus was born at *Nazareth*, his being a son of *Joseph* is a necessary consequence.

That in no part of the New Testament, excepting only the beginning of Matthew's and of Luke's Gospel, Jesus is said to have been born at Bethlehem, and supernaturally conceived, is a fact which cannot be denied. Not one of the four Evangelists has any where else, directly or indirectly, inculcated such a doctrine. In no passage of all the Epistles, or of the Acts of the Apostles, is any expression dropped which implies an approbation of it, or carries the faintest allusion to it, as a

doctrine originating with them. No where do we perceive a single trace of the enemies of the Gospel, amongst the Jews and Gentiles, having opposed it, which, I conceive, would inevitably have been the case, had it proceeded from Jesus and his apostles.

So far was this doctrine from not having been openly and directly taught by them, that it is very manifest from facts, which they have recorded, that it formed no part of their commission, and therefore cannot be true.

Matthew hath recorded these words: "And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed hence: and when he was come to his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, " Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James and Joses, and Simon and Judas, and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things \*?"

\* Cap. xiii. 54, 55.

Here, the people of the town, amongst whom our Lord had lived, put the question, *Is not this the carpenter's son?* Now, is it not obvious that they were of opinion, that this question was necessarily to be answered in the *affirmative*? Or does it not shew, that these people were as fully convinced that he was the offspring of *Joseph* as that he was the offspring of *Mary*? We have then the assurance of the very inhabitants of the place, where Jesus spent his life, that the story of his not being the son of Joseph is a downright falsehood.

The Jewish nation, mistaking the meaning of Malachi, entertained the undoubted belief, that the Messiah should be born in *Bethlehem*, the city of David. Hence, the townsmen of Jesus, on his having manifested amongst them that divine power and wisdom which *indicated* that he was the Christ, drew the necessary inference, that he *professed* himself to be a native of *Bethlehem*; and it is against this *supposed* profession that the following queries are directed: "His brethren James and Joses, and Simon and Judas, and his sisters, are they *not all with us*? Whence



then hath this man all these things?" As if they had said, "Have not his father, mother, and brethren, always lived with us in *Nazareth*? How then can this man perform works which intimate that he was born in *Bethlehem* \*?"

In the account ascribed to Luke we read thus: "And the angel came in unto Mary, and said, 'Hail, thou, that art highly favoured! the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.' And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, 'Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And behold! thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name *Jesus*. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David. And he

\* The common acceptance of the words *προς ἡμᾶς*, *with us*, is extremely futile. A sense of its futility induced the learned *Markland* (see the place in *Bowyer's Critical Conjectures*) to render the clause *like ourselves*; and this version, for want of a better, *Mr. Wakefield* has adopted in his new translation.

shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ;  
and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

In this address it is told, without a figure, that her son was to be the Messiah, whom the Jews expected to sit on the throne of David, and assume over mankind a dominion that should never end : and it appears, from the words which Mary herself uses in the sequel, that she understood the angel as making this assertion.

Let us now consider the following incident, which is recorded by the Evangelist *Mark* :  
" And the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. When his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him ; FOR THEY SAID HE IS BESIDE HIMSELF \*." *Mark* iii. 20, 21.

\* Critics and commentators have been at great pains in explaining this passage. Mr. Wakefield thus renders it : " And they came to a house ; and the multitude crowded together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his own family heard of it, they went out to secure him : for some had told them that he was gone out."

According to this version, the family of our Lord were with him in the house from which he is supposed to have gone

The friends here meant were his *relations*.  
In this critics are agreed. Indeed, the sa-

out. But this was not the case : for, in verses 31 and 32, we are told, that “ his mother and brethren came, and standing *without* to call him, SENT IN; for the multitude was sitting round : and they said unto him, ‘ Behold ! thy mother and thy brethren *WITHOUT* are inquiring for thee.” The words *they went out*, mean therefore, that they went out *from their own house*, and not from the house in which our Lord stood. This alone makes the sense consistent, and, indeed, rescues the whole passage from gross absurdity. For if they were with him in the house, when he went out, they must themselves have seen or heard him going. But the Evangelist says, when his own family *heard*—“ when some had told them that he was gone out, they went out to secure him.” Besides, what can be meant by the words “ they went out to secure (*ῥησάσαι*) or apprehend him ?” Finally ; the rendering of the word *ἐξέρη* by the phrase, *he was gone out*, is entirely unwarrantable. The term usually denotes an uncommon vehemence of passion, or a sudden *obliquity* of mind ; though a writer, from a regard to its constituent parts, might use it in the literal sense, to signify the removal of *a body*, by some instantaneous impulse, from its customary position, to a different situation. But an etymological refinement like this is not to be expected from any of the Evangelists, whose want of education, and unavoidable ignorance of those elegancies in the Greek language, which can be perceived only by a cultivated taste, compelled them to employ every word in its *popular* and *usual* signification. These observations are, I trust, sufficient to prove the fallacy of the above version, though supported by the ability and authority of Mr. Wakefield. I cannot, however, conclude this note without producing two arguments, which to my mind demonstrate that

cred historian, on returning, after a short digression, to the same subject, calls them the *mother and brethren of Jesus*.

His mother then thought, that he *was beside himself*, or, in other words, that *he was mad*.

the common translation is the just one; which implies, that the family of our Lord imagined that he was *beside himself*; or, more agreeably to the language and sentiments of a Jew, that *he had a dæmon*.—1. This idea existing in the mind of the historian, when relating this story, brought to his recollection, *by the law of the association of ideas*, a similar opinion maintained by the Pharisees. In consequence of this association he suspends, and that very abruptly, the narrative in hand, and relates the following: “The Scribes, which came down from Jerusalem, said, **HE HATH BELZEBUB**, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils,” &c.—2. Our Lord appears to have been aware, that his mother and brethren entertained some unworthy apprehension of him. This seems from the observation which he delivers on the occasion: “And he answered them, saying, ‘Who is my mother, or my brethren?’ And he looked round about on them which sate about him, and said, ‘Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.’” Let these words be examined impartially, and, surely, we must perceive, that the mother and brethren of Jesus were at this time guilty of some action, or of cherishing some opinion which did not accord with the will of God, and which excluded them from the number of his own disciples. Without this implication there would have been, in his remark on this occasion, an impertinence, and a want of filial tenderness.



But what could have been the cause of such an unworthy apprehension? It could be no other than this: her son, poor and illiterate as he was, did and said such things as *implied* that he was the Messiah, yet pursued a conduct the very reverse of what the Jews expected their Messiah to adopt. How was she to account for such a presumption, accompanied, at the same time, with so much inconsistency? The most natural way, it seems, to account for his conduct, was to suppose, what some of the Pharisees said of John, that he had a *dæmon*. The mother of our Lord then imagined, that her son was really mad, in claiming a dignity to which she had been informed, by an angel from heaven, that God would raise him!

From the account in Luke, we are necessarily led to conclude, that John the Baptist knew, even from his youth, that Jesus was to be the Messiah. But the following fact, related by the beloved Evangelist, shews, beyond controversy, that the Baptist did not know him as such, till he was informed of the fact in the wilderness. His words are very remarkable: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto

him, and saith, ‘ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ! This is he of whom I said, ‘ After me cometh a man which is preferred before me ; for he was before me. AND I KNEW HIM NOT ; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” *John* i. 29, 30, 31.

I shall produce one incident more, which is very striking. It is the following : “ Many of the people, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, SHALL CHRIST COME OUT OF GALILEE ? HATH NOT THE SCRIPTURE SAID THAT CHRIST COMETH OUT OF THE SEED OF DAVID, AND OUT OF THE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, WHERE DAVID WAS ? ” *John* vii. 40, 41, 42.

Here we see the people divided into two parties ; one believing, that Jesus was the Messiah, the other rejecting that belief ; for which they assigned this remarkable reason : That he was not born in Bethlehem, where the Christ was to be born, but in Galilee, whence none expected him to come. But

could these men reject our Lord as the Messiah for not being born at Bethlehem, had his birth actually taken place in that city? Or would the friends of Jesus have acquiesced in the objection, if they could so easily remove it, by replying, "That for this very reason he was the Christ, because he was born in Bethlehem?" It is evident then, on the face of this passage, that, in the estimation of both the friends and foes of our Lord in Jerusalem, he was a native of *Nazareth*, and not of Bethlehem.

That the Apostles of our Lord did not countenance the doctrine, that he was supernaturally conceived, and born at Bethlehem, will appear from the following remark. It is a fact manifest from the above passage, as well as many others in the writings of the Fathers, that the Jews of our Saviour's time objected to his being the Messiah, partly because he did not come from the city of David, and partly because he came from the despised town of Nazareth. "Can so great a good come out of Nazareth?" was an objection made not only by the unbelieving Jews, but by one of his own disciples. Upon

this city the pride of the inhabitants of Judæa looked, it seems, with a strong, though unreasonable, contempt. The odium which prejudice had associated with the place of his birth, malignity transferred to the person of our Lord. Hence, the name *Jesus of Nazareth*, continually in the mouth of his enemies, conveyed the bitterest reproach, which they endeavoured to augment by connecting with it the ideas of poverty, obscurity, meanness, and, above all, that of an ignominious death.

Now, it may be asked, if our Lord had really been born in Bethlehem, would not his Apostles, in preaching the Gospel after his death, have always styled him “Jesus of Bethlehem,” instead of “Jesus of Nazareth;” since, by this means, they would have rescued him from the odium and calumny attached to his character. To suppose, that they would not have called their Divine Master by this name, could they have done it consistently with truth, is to suppose them either destitute of respect for his person and zeal in his cause, or that they betrayed the grossest stupidity in their endeavours to diffuse his doctrine,



Either of these suppositions, I will be bold to affirm, cannot be made with any colour of truth. Their zeal, their discernment, their cool deliberation, and their resolute behaviour, may be proved and illustrated in a thousand ways. One or two instances in the conduct of Peter, which sufficiently evince his address and alacrity in this respect, I shall here lay before my reader.

When this Apostle and his fellow-labourer John were going to the temple, the former thus accosted the *lame man* sitting at the gate: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ OF NAZARETH, rise up and walk \*." Now, one of the chief objects which Peter had in view, by annexing, as their enemies always did, the name of *Nazareth* to Jesus Christ, on this and other occasions, was to transfer to it those sentiments of admiration and love which that miracle necessarily excited in the beholders, and thus induce them to embrace the *holy one*, whom they had crucified, and esteem him, whom they hated without a cause.

\* Acts iii. 6.

A proof that this was his design, is the consideration, that whenever the Apostles were in circumstances (such as in places out of Judæa) where this prejudice did not prevail, they never subjoined the term *Nazareth* to the name of Jesus, on the performance of miracles.

Another instance of this kind we may select from the tenth of the Acts : “ You know the word,” says Peter to Cornelius and his friends, “ which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached ; *Jesus of Nazareth*, how God anointed him with holy spirit and power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil.”

The Apostle was aware, that on mentioning the name *Nazareth* a violent prejudice arose in the minds of his hearers. He therefore hastens to remove it, by assuring them, that God *anointed* him, that is, *purified* or *washed him* from the pollution which he had contracted from his connexion with *Nazareth*, and the ignominy of crucifixion. This

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consideration plainly shews, that he mentioned the place whence our Lord had come *with reluctance*, and that he would have avoided it, or substituted for it the name of *Bethlehem*, could he have done so without violating the truth. Yet Peter says, contrary to his inclination, not only that Christ came from Nazareth, but that the *word*, or *information* concerning him, *began* in Galilee,—and that at the *close* of the baptism of John. If, however, credit is to be given to the tale of the miraculous conception, this is not true; for the *first* information of him was given by the magi in Jerusalem. And is it credible, that our Apostle, in explaining the rudiments of the Gospel, should have passed over in silence facts which it were so much to his purpose to relate? Nothing would have been so likely to affect the mind of a *Gentile*, who, like most other Gentiles, was probably devoted to *astrology*, as the assurance, that at the birth of Christ a star appeared in the East, and pointed him out to certain wise men as the future king of the Jews. But so far from saying any thing of the kind, Peter tells him the very reverse; which is a circumstance, had there been no other in their writings, sufficient to

demonstrate, that the contents of the two first chapters of the supposed Matthew were either *unknown* to the Apostles, or (which will appear hereafter to be the fact) that knowing them, they did not believe them to be founded in truth.

From these, and many other parts of the New Testament, we may with certainty conclude, that the doctrine which represents our Saviour to have been supernaturally conceived, and born at Bethlehem, is a palpable falsehood. This appears from the *implied* testimony of his countrymen, of his own mother, of his friends and foes in Jerusalem, and, finally, of his chosen disciples; all these persons, without exception, having considered him as the son of Joseph, and a native of Nazareth. And this universal belief, in very early times, the fabricators of the miraculous conception attempted to account for, and explain away, by certain plausible means, furnished by the extraordinary conduct of Paulina, the very woman with whom the story originated.

Those who first contrived the tale, in consequence of denying Jesus to be the offspring

of Joseph, did not insist, that he was a descendant of David. Thus far they acted with perfect consistency. But the persons who in after times framed it anew, and inserted it in the New Testament, saw, that this consequence would overthrow the proofs drawn from the prophecies, that Jesus was the Christ; as the Messiah, according to them, would spring in the line of David. But how could he have descended from David, unless he was the offspring of Joseph, who was known to come from that patriarch? This perplexing question was solved by the assertion, sometimes, that Mary, as well as her husband, derived her pedigree from the stem of Jesse; and, at other times, that Jesus was the son of Joseph by *adoption*.

This, however, was a question of small difficulty, compared with the following, which was necessary to be removed before the tale could have any degree of plausibility. Our Lord was universally known to be the son of Joseph, and known too to have been born of Mary, after her espousal to Joseph, within the time, which proved him a *legitimate* child. But the credibility of the tale

required, that he should be represented to have been born whilst his mother was yet a *virgin*, and *prior* to her espousal. Could the authors of the story have made this assertion? No; they could not have done it, without directly contradicting a well-known fact. And if, on the contrary, this point were conceded, namely, that Jesus was born *after* the marriage of his mother, how could it happen, that he was not the lawful offspring of her husband? This was a dilemma indeed; but, fortunately, the case of Paulina afforded them an expedient, by which to resolve the difficulty with some degree of speciousness.

This woman, on receiving the invitation from Anubis, went to the temple to administer, as she supposed, to the pleasure of the god; but, contrary to her expectation, a man interposes, and assumes to himself the enjoyment which was intended for the divine lover. This extraordinary circumstance the deceivers had only to *reverse*. This was the desired expedient; and thus they applied it to the mother of our Lord: "After his mother was espoused to Joseph, *but*



before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." The plain meaning of which is—" *Mary, indeed, was espoused to Joseph at the time of her conception: nevertheless she was not pregnant by him. For before the happy pair had an opportunity to enjoy the first fruits of their union, the Divine Being interposed, and made her with child \*.*"

\* What occasion this story has given to unbelievers for deriding the whole Gospel, may be seen from the following paragraph, extracted from the *Age of Reason*.

" The story, taking it as it is told, is blasphemously obscene. It gives an account of a young woman engaged to be married; and, while under this engagement, she is, to speak plain language, debauched by a ghost, under the impious pretence, that *the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*. Notwithstanding which, Joseph afterwards marries her, cohabits with her as his wife, and, in his turn, rivals the ghost. This is putting the story into intelligible language; and, when told in this manner, there is not a priest but must be ashamed to own it.

" Obscenity in matters of faith, however wrapped up, is always a token of fable and imposture: for it is necessary to our serious belief in God, that we do not connect it with stories that run, as this does, into ludicrous interpretations. This story is, upon the face of it, the same kind of story as that of Jupiter and Leda, or Jupiter and Europa, or any of the amorous adventures of Jupiter; and *skewes, as is already stated in the former part of the AGE OF REASON, that the Christian faith is built upon the heathen mythology.*" Part II. p. 51.

This representation, suspicious and impious as it is, appears indisputable, if a close attention be given to the words of the original: "And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, called Christ: *but* (δε) the birth of Jesus was thus: *for* (γαρ) after his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, *before* they came together, she was discovered with child by the Holy Spirit." The disjunctive *but*, for which, in the common translation, is substituted *now*, is here used to prevent the reader from drawing the obvious conclusion, that she conceived of her husband; while the conjunction *for* assigns the reason *why* Joseph was not the father of Jesus—"Because his mother, after her marriage, *but before* the husband had access to her, was impregnated by the Spirit of God." Such is the manner in which Egyptian fraud has endeavoured to explain away the well-established notion, that our Saviour was the son of Joseph.

The next received opinion, which the de-  
ceivers had to account for and invalidate, was  
his being a native of *Nazareth*.

That Christ had lived in this city, and was hence called a *Nazarene*, were facts of general notoriety, and which it was not safe for falsehood to deny. If then he were born, as the story of the miraculous conception asserts, at *Bethlehem*, how came he to leave that place?—a place which, in the mistaken estimation of the Jews, demanded the honourable birth and residence of the Messiah:—and how, in particular, came he to dwell in a town, which brought upon him *ignominy* and *contempt*? These were perplexing questions, which the framers of the story endeavoured to answer, by recurring to the famous woman, whose conduct furnished them with the materials of the tale. On being banished from Rome, Paulina retired into Egypt; a place into which thousands of Christians, we are assured from Philo, fled for refuge from persecution. Her flight to that country easily suggested the expediency of sending Joseph and Mary there too. But what motive could be assigned for their flight? “Herod was about to seek the child to destroy him.” But why so far for refuge? “No safety could be obtained in any corner of Judæa, for he slew the children *in all the*

*coast thereof.*" But how could Herod know, that Jesus, an infant, and the son of a poor carpenter, was to become king of the Jews? "Certain magi from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is the infant king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and we are come to pay him homage. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and wanted to kill the child."

But why did not Joseph and Mary, on being informed in Egypt of the death of Herod, again return to Bethlehem, the place of their abode, and which claimed the honour of his residence? "Hearing, that *Archelaus* reigned in Judæa instead of Herod his father, they *were afraid* to go thither." But what could have been their reason for retiring to a city so obnoxious as that of Nazareth? "Being warned of God in a dream, they went and dwelt in that city, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken *by the prophets*, He shall be *called* a *Nazarene*." You mean to say then, that, although Jesus was in reality a citizen of Bethlehem, yet his countrymen were to call him erroneously by the name of Nazareth? "That is the meaning which



we wish to insinuate." But, if it be not too close a question, Who were those prophets that foretold this event?—Your silence is very consistent. General assertions are the usual proofs with lyars and impostors.

If we narrowly compare *this cunningly devised fable*, as it is related in Matthew and in Luke, various striking differences will present themselves between these supposed accounts of the two Evangelists, not only in the *facts* which compose it, but in the *style* of its composition. As it stands in Luke, its language and ideas can be traced to no other country but *Judæa*. Not one of those extraordinary events which took place at Rome, and which compose the fable in Matthew, are here mentioned. To none of those events is there even an allusion. On the contrary, the whole is made up of Jewish incidents; is filled with the names of persons and places, with opinions, customs, and ceremonies, which could only be understood by the people of *Judæa*, and interesting to natives of that country. It is also crowded with prophecies, merely calculated to flatter Jewish pride, and with peculiarities which characterise the Jewish language. It is sufficient, I trust, to

make this one general remark, the truth of which none can doubt; and I may be excused from entering into a minute analysis of the contents of those chapters. Now, what is the conclusion, which it is most reasonable to draw from this peculiarity? It is obviously this—*That the account of the miraculous conception prefixed to Luke's Gospel was borrowed from the Egyptians, and carried into Judæa, and there fabricated by some Jewish converts, in a manner less liable to exposure, and more accommodating to the prejudices of the Jewish nation.*

This important conclusion I shall confirm by two additional remarks. The events which form the substance of the story, as composed at Rome, and of which the forgers availed themselves to account for the general opinion, that our Lord was the son of Joseph, and a native of Nazareth, however false, yet as they were events which took place in a very remote country, could not be sufficiently detected and exposed. Taking advantage, therefore, of their distance from Judæa, they freely made use of such fictions as best suited their purpose. But let us suppose, that a Jew,

a friend or a sharer in the forgery, conveyed it to Judæa, or any of the neighbouring countries; could he *there* say, that magi came from the East, announcing the birth of the Messiah; that, in consequence, Herod, with all Jerusalem, was troubled; that being deluded by the magi, he slew all the infants in Bethlehem and the surrounding coasts; that, to avoid his anger, Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt, and, on returning thence, went and settled at Nazareth? All these events being notorious falsehoods, he could not assert them, without being refuted and exposed both by the friends and enemies of our Lord. *Accordingly, in the tale related by the supposed Luke, they are, every one of them, suppressed.*

But those who conveyed the story to Judæa, which they could not have done till long after its first fabrication, were obliged not only to exclude these notorious falsehoods, but also not to introduce any *new fact*, or specify any *particular* event, which might be capable of refutation. The caution with which they were forced to proceed in this respect it is very curious to observe.

Jesus, indeed, is here affirmed to have been

born at Bethlehem : but the prophecy of Micah, which the Jews regarded as predicting the Messiah's birth in that place, is not cited in support of the affirmation. The enemies of Jesus had always objected to him, that he was not a native of that city ; and himself, with his friends, acquiesced in the objection. It could not, therefore, be soon asserted, that he actually received his birth there, and thence argued, that he was the Messiah. Joseph, it was known by the inhabitants of Nazareth at least, had never regarded his son as the king of the Jews, and probably died before his ministry commenced. Hence, in Luke no notice is taken of him, nor is it said, that any intimation was given him, that Jesus was to be the Christ. But it might be urged, that our Lord, if asserted to have been born at Bethlehem, might easily have been refuted, unless the assertion were true, by making the proper inquiry of the inhabitants. To prevent, however, such refutation, Mary is represented as having been delivered not in a *house*, but in a *stall* \* or a *den*, at some distance from the village.

\* The stall in which our Lord is said to have been born lay in a *den*, which was one of those *subterraneous cells* where shepherds drove their flocks, or thieves assembled, and brought



She is related, moreover, to have brought forth *in the night*. In the *night* an angel is sent to the shepherds; and these shepherds have no *names* given them. Such is the caution which the first propagators of the miraculous conception were obliged to take, when they first taught it in Judæa, or the adjacent countries.

It remains now to explain the well-known difference which subsists between the two *genealogies* given in Matthew and Luke. This difference has been the subject of great dispute in every age, and proved a source of much perplexity to the believer, whilst it has furnished the infidel with a formidable argument against the truth and authenticity of those Gospels\*.

together their booty. But we shall presently see, that the idea of representing him to be born in a *den* was suggested by the magicians, who usually practised their mysterious rites in such places. Origen goes so far as to say, that this den was well known even in his time, and that the very clothes were there to be seen in which the infant Jesus was wrapped. See, if you please, p. 39 of his book against Celsus.

\* What use infidels have made of the difference between these genealogies, in attempting to undermine the whole system of Christianity, may be seen from the following extract.  
 “ The history of Jesus Christ is contained in the four books

Now, supposing, that the genealogy of Luke formed a part of the miraculous conception,

ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The first chapter of Matthew begins with giving a genealogy of Jesus Christ; and in the third chapter of Luke there is also given a genealogy of Jesus Christ. Did these two agree, it would not prove the genealogy to be true, because it might nevertheless be a fabrication; but as they contradict each other in every particular, it proves falsehood absolutely. If Matthew speaks truth, Luke speaks falsehood; and if Luke speaks truth, Matthew speaks falsehood: *and as there is no authority for believing one more than another, there is no authority for believing either; and if they cannot be believed, even in the first thing they say, and set out to prove, they are not entitled to be believed in any thing they say afterwards.*

“ If these men, Matthew and Luke, set out with a falsehood between them (as these two accounts show they do) in the very commencement of their history of Jesus Christ, and of who and what he was, what authority (as I have before asked) is there left for believing the strange things they tell us afterwards? If they cannot be believed in their account of his natural genealogy, how are we to believe them when they tell us, that he was the Son of God, begotten by a ghost, and that an angel announced this in secret to his mother? If they lied in one genealogy, why are we to believe them in the other? If his natural genealogy was manufactured, which it certainly is, why are we not to suppose that his celestial genealogy is manufactured also; and that the whole is fabulous? Can any man of serious reflection hazard his future happiness upon the belief of a story, naturally impossible, repugnant to every idea of decency, and related by persons already detected of falsehood? *Is it not more safe, that we stop ourselves at the plain, pure, and unmixed belief of one God, which is*

yet as the tale inserted in this Evangelist was propagated in Judæa, it would follow, that *this*, and not the genealogy in Matthew, is the true one. But the fact is, that Luke, as we shall presently see, having heard of the fabrication of a false genealogy by the Egyptian converts, wrote that which goes by his name, to contradict, and to shew the falsehood of the other. But what could have been the object of those forgers in framing a false genealogy? Their view was first to prove, by certain coincidences, that Jesus was the king of the Jews, and that Joseph, his father, fled with him, in the manner related, into Egypt, in conformity to a supposed typical reference borne to him by the patriarch *Joseph*. Hence he is, in this genealogy, said to be the son of *Jacob*, whereas he was, in truth, the son of *Heli*. But how, it will be asked, could they prove, that Jesus was the Christ, from a false fabrication of his pedigree? They first represent Abraham and David as *types* of the Messiah, and the Babylonish captivity as *emblematical* of the

Deism, than commit ourselves to an ocean of improbable, irrational, indecent, and contradictory tales?" *The Age of Reason*, Part II. pages 52—54.

bondage of the Jews under *Augustus* ; and, in the second place, insinuate, that the deliverance of the Jewish nation, under the Christ, would happen at a distance of time from the last period, consisting of the same number of generations with those which fill up the two preceding intervals. But, unfortunately, this circumstance, instead of proving Jesus to be the temporal king whom the Jews expected, only proves them to be impostors. These men, be it remembered, whilst they were relating the birth of our Lord, and the fancied events which happened under Herod at Jerusalem, had in their minds those real scenes which occurred in the days of Tiberius, on the introduction of Christianity into Rome. And *this* time, which was about forty years, or one generation afterwards, they, through *inadvertency*, against which it was impossible for a forger to be always sufficiently on his guard, actually confounded with the pretended period of our Saviour's birth. " So all the generations from Abraham to David," say they, " are *fourteen* generations ; and from David, until the carrying away into Babylon, are *fourteen* generations ; and from the carrying away into



Babylon unto Christ are *fourteen* generations." But the truth is, that from Babylon unto Christ are only *thirteen* generations, as will appear to any that will take the trouble of reckoning them ; whereas from Babylon to *Tiberius*, the time of this forgery, there are properly *fourteen*.

There remains one farther difficulty to be explained ; a difficulty which in every age has supplied abundant materials for controversy amongst learned men, and furnished them with a fair opportunity to exercise their ingenuity in critical conjectures. The difficulty to which I refer is contained in the following passage, which is thus translated by Mr. Wakefield :—" And in those days a decree came forth from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should register themselves : now this first registering was when Cyrenius was governor of Syria \*."

Before I proceed to explain this passage, I must cite from Josephus the account which he has given of the event here signified.

\* Luke, cap. ii. 1, 2.

It is as follows :—“ Cyrenius, a senator, arrived with a few in Syria, being sent there by Cæsar to administer justice to the nation, and to assess their property. Coponius, a knight, is commissioned with him, who was invested with supreme power over the Jews. And Cyrenius came into Judæa, now added to Syria, in order to assess the properties of the Jews, and dispose of the effects of Archelaus. But they, though dreading the very name of the enrolment, ceased to make farther opposition to it, by the persuasion of Joazarus, the high priest. But Judas Gaulonitis, together with one Sadducus, a Pharisee, urged them to rebel ; asserting, that the enrolment brought upon them nothing less than entire slavery, and calling upon the nation to maintain their liberty.”

Now every reader, I affirm, who examines these two passages without prejudice, will immediately conclude, that they both refer to the same event. It is, however, contended by learned critics, that the taxation spoken of in Luke was imposed not when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, but when Herod the Great was king of Judæa. To me, I confess, it

seems a matter of astonishment, that an opinion so diametrically opposite to the plain declaration of the writer should have been entertained by any intelligent and candid inquirer. In as much, however, as this opinion is supported by numberless authorities of the first respectability, I shall think it worth while to bestow a few words in the refutation of it. It is said then, that the assessment here mentioned was exacted in the reign of *Herod*. This is false: first, because the writer says *virtually* that it was not in the reign of Herod, and that at the time there was *no king* in Judæa. To give an example: suppose a future historian was to write thus:—"Robespierre tyrannized over the French when George the Third was king of England;" would not this language fairly imply that no king existed *then* in France? The case is quite parallel. "This assessment," says the writer, "happened when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." He does not say, *when Herod ruled over Judæa*. If, therefore, the author's own declaration is to be regarded, it follows, that at the period of the enrolment specified by him there was no king in that country.

This opinion is false, Secondly ; because I have already demonstrated, that our Lord was not born till *two years after* the death of Herod the Great.

Thirdly ; because, if Judæa had in truth been assessed under the reign of Herod, who was made king of that country by Augustus, Josephus would have mentioned this assessment as an extraordinary event ; whereas it appears manifest from his narrative that such an event had *never before* taken place. “ The Jews,” he says, “ though dreading *at first* the very name of the enrolment, ceased to make farther opposition to it,” &c. Again, “ Judas Gaulonitis urged them to rebel ; asserting, that the enrolment brought upon them was nothing less than entire slavery.” Does not this language clearly imply that the Jews *had not before* that time registered themselves for taxation ? How could they *then first* dread the name of registering, if they had long ago submitted to it, and become *familiar* to it ? And how could Judas have asserted that it brought slavery upon them, if they had *previously* been enslaved by it ?



Fourthly ; because it is manifest, from the Acts of the Apostles, that Judæa had never been taxed more than *once*.—" And after this man rose up Judas of Galilee, *in the days of the taxing.*" By connecting Judas with the period of taxation, without *any farther specification*, Gamaliel evidently shews that not more than one period of that kind had occurred. For instance, if a writer of the history of England should say, that the kingdom was divided by *Alfred* into several distinct parts for the better administration of justice, would not his use of that name, without any epithet, *second* or *third*, annexed to it, prove that but *one* Alfred reigned in England ?

Lastly ; the opinion, that Judæa was taxed under Herod the Great is unfounded ; because the " passage of so extraordinary a nature," which Lardner adduces to prove it, itself proves the *contrary*. A clause of this paragraph is thus rendered by him :—" When, therefore, the whole Jewish nation took an oath to be faithful to Cæsar, and the interests of the king, these men (namely the Pharisees) to the number of above six thousand, *refused*

*to swear* \*.” The object of the oath here mentioned is expressly said to have been *not to tax* the Jewish nation, but to bind their allegiance to Cæsar and Herod.

But this is not my principal argument. “The Pharisees,” says the historian, “above six thousand of them, *refused to swear*.” This oath then required of the Jews was not a subject of *compulsion*, but a matter of discretion, which *all* might, and which *many* did, actually decline. It could not, therefore, have been the consequence of a “decree which came forth from Cæsar Augustus;” for they would then have been *compelled* to a compliance, and punished, if they ultimately *refused*; which was the case only with those who were otherwise guilty.

From all these considerations, it can no longer be questioned, but that the assessment spoken of in this chapter was that imposed on Judæa by Augustus, when Cyrenius was president of Syria; that is, about ten years *after* the decease of Herod the Great. I will

\* Vol. i. p. 279.

next proceed to the explanation of the passage, which the reader will see is very curious, and which itself demonstrates that it never came from the hand of Luke. With this view, I must repeat what has frequently been shewn, namely, that the authors of the miraculous conception supposed our Saviour to be the prince who should reign in Israel, and deliver it from the Roman yoke. This is the leading idea which is inculcated in this place:—"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that *all the world* (or, as it is in the original, *all the inhabitable earth*) should be taxed." Here the forgers insinuate, that Cæsar had the arrogance to claim to himself that grand, universal empire which belonged only to the Messiah of the Jews; for to tax the whole world was to bring the whole world under subjection to him; taxation being the badge of subjugation. "And this taxing was \* *first* made

\* The term *πρωτος* is not always used in an arithmetical sense, to denote priority of *number*, as when it is opposed to *second*, *third*, &c. but often to signify pre-eminence in point of rank or dignity. For instance: "Ὁς εαν θελη," says our Lord to his disciples, "εν υμιν ειναι ΠΡΩΤΟΣ, εστω υμιν

when Cyrenius was governor of Syria;" which ought to be rendered this *capital*, this *chief*, this *superior* taxing to any which Augustus had the insolence ever before to impose, was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria."—"And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. *And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.*" Observe the point which it is the object of the impostors to inculcate: "When Cæsar ar-

δουλος:"—*Whoever wishes to be FIRST among you, let him be a SERVANT.* Here it obviously expressed a *master*, in opposition to his *servant*, or, more generally, a *superior* to a person that is *subordinate* to him. In the same sense it is used by the Baptist, when he says of Jesus, "Πρωτος μου εστι," *He is my superior; he is my master; and I am but his servant.* The Latin word *primus* has frequently the same signification, as in the following lines of Virgil:

Arma virumque cano Trojæ qui PRIMUS ab oris . . .

PRIMA quod ad Trojam pro charis gesserat Argis.

See also *Lucretius*, lib. i. 87.



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rogated to himself that unbounded empire which the Almighty intended for the king of the Jews alone; when he had, moreover, the insolence to subjugate the favourite and chosen people of God; at *that very time* the Messiah came into the world. Providence had so arranged the period of his appearance, and so controlled the counsels of his enemies, that he was born the very hour in which his parents, and the other Jews, were sealing their slavery."

Lest the import of this divine interposition should not be understood by the Jewish people, an angel is brought down from Heaven to remind them of it.—"The angel said unto the shepherds, 'Fear not; for, behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all this people. For unto you is born *this day*, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'—'Abstain from grief:' as if he had said, 'The prospect of slavery is removed from the people of God. I am commissioned to bring you the joyful news that your deliverer from the Roman government is born *this day*—

this *very day*, when your necks are *first* bending to its yoke."

From this explanation, which, though so very obvious, has hitherto escaped the attention of critics, two conclusions are to be derived: *one* is, what we have already been insisting upon, that the story of the miraculous conception, as inserted in Luke, was taken from that fabricated in Rome, and thence conveyed to Judæa, where it was planned in a manner more conciliating to the Jewish nation. Viewed in this respect, the forgers have shewn a considerable skill. They adopted for their purpose an idea, which was most soothing to the affliction, and congenial to the pride of the Jews; and on that account the most likely to reconcile them to Jesus as their expected Messiah. The second conclusion is, that Luke never wrote these chapters: for, at the time he composed his Gospel, he fully understood the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. And it cannot be supposed by any friend of Christianity, that, whilst our honest Evangelist had too much wisdom to be mistaken himself, he had the baseness to adopt the idea of our Lord's being a temporal prince, as an expe-



dient to deceive others. However, lest infidelity should have the impudence to allege this charge against him, I shall hereafter produce his own explicit and noble testimony against the story and its authors.

From the facts developed in the preceding enquiry, it is concluded, that the story of the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ, was fabricated by the priests of Isis; and that the events, said to have happened at Jerusalem, did in reality take place, with little variation, at *Rome*. In confirmation of this conclusion, I proceed to shew, that the accounts we now have, respecting his supernatural birth, in the introductions of Matthew and Luke, have been copied from two gospels; one entitled, *The Gospel of the Infancy of our Saviour*; the other, *The Gospel of the Birth of Mary*\*.

But before I begin this enquiry, it is necessary to trace, which I shall do as briefly as possible, the origin of those false teachers, who are known under the name of GNOSTICKS. Of the early appearance of these

\* These gospels may be seen in the second volume of *Jermiah Jones*, on the Canon; where an English translation of them is annexed.

heretics, no doubt can be entertained; as they are the men whom the apostles oppose in their respective epistles. It appears too, from their own account, that they were contemporary with the first teachers of the gospel\*. But, Who were the persons or person that first taught the Gnostic heresy? Irenæus†, Epiphanius, and many others, affirm, that it originated with *Simon Magus*. The truth, however, of this opinion, may be justly questioned, for the following reasons:

1. Because Simon never ranked himself with any denomination of Christians ‡.

So far from being a disciple of Jesus, he

\* Tertullian says of them, "Because they existed in the apostolic age they are so audacious, as to arrogate to their doctrines the authority of the apostles." His own words are somewhat different, but this is the substance of them;—*De Præscriptione Hæreticorum*. p. 219.

† Simon autem Samaritanus ex quo universæ hereses substituerunt. Irenæus, lib. i. p. 94. Atque hinc eorum, quos Gnosticos appellamus origo profluxit. Epiphan. vol. i. p. 58. This too was the opinion of the author of the *Clementine Homilies*:—'Αιτινες αἰρεσεις, ὡς σχαζομαι, απο του του θεου βλασφημουτος Σιμωνος την αρεχην λαβουσαι. Hom. xvi. p. 729.

‡ It is true, indeed, that Simon believed and was baptized. But the apostle Peter soon turned him out of the Christian church. Acts viii. 13—23.

was a professed adversary of his apostles, and his religion. In derision of the title *God the Son*, given our Lord, soon after his resurrection, by many mistaken converts among the Gentiles, he stiled himself *God the Father*\*; and to ridicule the *Mother of God*, as Mary was called, he said, that his wife *Helen*, was the mother of the Holy Ghost. Since then this impostor was not a Christian, nor pretended to be one, no sect of Christians could have had their origin with him.

2. The assertion of Irenæus, that Simon was the first teacher of the Gnostics, is erroneous:—Because these his followers would, in that case, have prevailed mostly in Samaria. But they did not prevail in that country. *Egypt* was the place where they chiefly abounded: And had they been Samaritans, they would have been so obnoxious to the Jewish converts, that the latter

\* Iren. p. 94. Epiphan. p. 52, 56. These authors do not indeed say, that Simon made these pretensions in derision of the titles given to Jesus Christ and his Mother: But that this was his object in so doing, I shall in the sequel prove, by a remarkable fact.

That Simon endeavoured to rival our Lord, and that his followers were a distinct sect from every denomination of Christians, is expressly affirmed by Origen contra Celsum. p. 272.

would be in no danger of being deluded by their specious impostures. But so captivating were their tenets, and such was the address with which they insinuated themselves into the churches, that it required all the exertions of the apostles to prevent the new converts from being led away by them.

3. The followers of Simon Magus were comparatively few in number; and we may conclude from the manner in which Justin and Origen speak of them, that they were a sect quite different from the Christians, and nearly extinct in their times\*.

The answer, then, to the above question is, not that Simon Magus, but that the Egyptian impostors at Rome, were the founders of the Gnostic heresy. This will appear from the following considerations :

\* Justin says expressly, that though his own nation, the Samaritans, considered Simon as the supreme God, there were but few among other nations that fell into such an impious superstition.—Ολίγοι δὲ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις ἔθνεσιν, ὡς τοῦ πρῶτου Θεοῦ, ἐκείνου ἐμολογούντες, ἐκείνον καὶ προσκυνοῦσιν. *Apol. i. p. 52. Oxford edit.*

Quin et Simon Samaritanus Magus, per magiam suam, quosdam decissere conatus, effectu non caruit ad tempus; nunc autem in toto orbe opinor vix triginta Simonianos reperiri; ac fortasse ne tot quidem. Origen *Con. Celsum. p. 44.*



1. The Philologers in the court of Tiberius were, for the most part, Egyptians. As they were expelled from Rome, they went, it is natural to suppose, into their own country, where they must have carried their heresy with them: And we find, that Egypt was the place in which Gnosticism, with its professors, chiefly flourished.

2. From the accounts which are given us of the Gnostics by Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius\*, it appears, that their tenets were a strange mixture of the Egyptian superstition, with the Christian theology. They maintained, that Christ was the same with *Horus*, one of the divinities of Egypt; and as they distinguished between the elder and younger Horus, they believed in a superior and inferior Christ †. They seem, moreover, to have appropriated to our Lord,

\* Respecting Valentinus, and his followers, Epiphanius writes thus :—*Λέγει δὲ αὐτὸς τε καὶ οἱ αὐτοῦ τὸν Κυρίον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ὡς εἶπεν, καὶ Σωτῆρα, καὶ Χριστόν, καὶ Λόγον, καὶ Σταυρόν, καὶ Μεταγωγίαν, καὶ Οὐροδείτην, καὶ Οὐρόν.* Vol. I. p. 171. See also Irenæus, p. 18.

† Hence Origen says of the heretics: *Duos quidem Deos ausos esse Hæreticos dicere; et Duos Christos audivimus.* Lib. ii. περὶ ἀρχῶν. cap. vii.

the title of *Pan*\*; because he possessed the plenitude of those gifts bestowed upon him by the other angels. And what is more remarkable still, they worshipped the *Serpent*, as the source of all wisdom; and pretended, that it was the same with Christ†. Now, if we review what has been said of the false teachers in Rome, we shall perceive, that

\* Τὸς, τὸν Σωτῆρα τὸν ἐκ πάντων ὄντα, τὸ Παν εἶναι, διὰ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ, παν ἀρξεν διανοίγον μητρὰν, δηλοῦσθαι λεγούσι οὗς τὸ Παν ὢν, διηκολίξεν τὴν μητρὰν τῆς Εὐθυμῆσεως. Iren. p. 17. See also p. 14, at the bottom.

† Ophitæ huic scientiam omnem tribuunt, itaque profitentur Serpentem hominibus scientiæ omnis authorem extitisse. Epiphan. p. 270. This they pretended to be Christ himself: And endeavoured to prove the truth of this opinion, from the Old and New Testaments. See again the same author, p. 274, 275. In page 263, I have shewn, that the impostors at Rome represented Christ as a *good demon*, to which they gave the name of *Chrestus*. Here we have a confirmation of that fact. The Ophitæ, a sect of the Egyptian Gnostics, worshipped the Serpent, and maintained, that it was no other than Christ. But we read, in an extract of Eusebius, from *Philo Biblius*, that the Phœnicians and Egyptians called that animal ἀγαθὸν δαίμονα a *good demon*. Euseb. Evan Præpar, Lib. i. cap. x. Again, in page 268, I have shewn, that the deceivers pretended, that Christ was the same with *Serapis*, or *Osiris*. This fact, too, we here see confirmed. Since they worshipped the Serpent, as an external symbol of our Lord, they must have taught, that he and Serapis were also the same: for the Serpent, it is well known, was regarded as the representative of that divinity.—Ipsum Serapidem draco repræsentabat. See *Spencer de Legibus Hebræorum*, p. 427.

they blended the Egyptian theology with the new faith, and supposed our Lord to be a *good demon*, called *Chrestus*, which had descended to this earth for the benefit of mankind. They represented him, too, as being the Egyptian divinity Serapis, and moreover gave him the name of *Pan*. Being devotees of Isis, they must also have been worshippers of the Serpent, an image of which, we are assured by Diodorus Siculus, and Macrobius, was placed in the temples, dedicated to that goddess as an object of divine honours.

3. Some of the early Egyptian Gnostics, on account of their hatred towards the apostles, and their faithful followers, affected to defend the treachery, and venerate the character of *Judas*. They even used a gospel, which they ascribed to him, in preference to the genuine records of the evangelists. In as much as they professed to follow that traitor, and so much resembled him in character, he might not improperly be said to have been the founder of their sects. Accordingly we find that some of the ancients represent Judas Iscariot, as the father of the Gnostic heretics\*.

\* See a note in Tertullian *De Præscriptione Hæreticorum*, p.

4. The multitude of heretics, which, even in the age of the apostles, overspread the Christian world, and which introduced themselves, as we shall see in the sequel, into the apostolic churches, points to Rome as the real source of them: since the circumstance of their being expelled thence by the emperor, easily accounts for their vast numbers, and their wide dispersion. In addition to these reasons I shall only remark, in this place, that several passages in the New Testament will direct us to that city, and to no other place, as the true origin of the Gnostic heretics.

I proceed next to shew, that the Gospel of our *Saviour's Infancy* was, in its primary, though doubtless not in its present state, the composition of the Gnostic heretics, who

219, where this is shewn to have been the opinion of Galterius, founded on the authority of Alexander the patriarch of Alexandria, Athanasius, and Jerome. The words of the latter I shall quote hereafter. The heretics pretended, Judas had greater knowledge, and was more accurately acquainted with the truth of the gospel, than were the other disciples. Et hæc Judam Proditorem diligenter (ακριβως) cognovisse dicunt, et solum præ cæteris cognoscentem veritatem, perfecisse proditiōis mysterium: per quem, et terrena et cœlestia, omnia dissoluta sunt. Et confinctionem (συμπλασι) afferunt hujus modi, Judæ Evangelium illud vocantes. Iren. p. 112, at the bottom.



had come from Rome. This will appear :

First, Because it is one of those books which they used, and which, Irenæus says, they fabricated. The passage to which I allude in that author, is as follows :—" Besides these, they introduce a vast many apocryphal and spurious writings, which they had forged, so as to perplex the unintelligent, who are unacquainted with the true records." For which purpose they adopt this artifice :—" The Lord," say they, " (being a boy at school), when his master, as is usual, desired him to say Alpha, answered Alpha. But when the master again ordered him to say Beta, the Lord replied: ' Tell you me first what Alpha is, and then I will tell you what Beta is : ' and this they explain as if he alone understood the unknown meaning contained in the form of Alpha\*."

Compare this passage with the following, which is taken from the Gospel of the Infancy :

" There was also at Jerusalem, one, nam-

\* Irenæus, p. 86. cap. xvii.

ed Zaccheus, who was a school-master. He said to Joseph, '*Joseph*, why dost thou not send Jesus to me, that he may learn his letters.' Joseph agreed, and told the divine Mary; so they brought him to that master, who, as soon as he saw him, wrote out an alphabet for him, and he bade him say Aleph: and when he had said Aleph, the master bade him pronounce Beth. Then the Lord Jesus said to him, 'Tell me first the meaning of the letter Aleph, and then I will pronounce Beth.' The Lord Jesus farther said to the master, 'Take notice how I say to thee.' Then he began clearly and distinctly to say, Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Dalith, and so on, to the end of the alphabet. At this the master was so surprized, that he said, 'I believe that this boy was born before Noah;' and turning to Joseph, 'Thou hast brought a boy to me to be taught, who is more learned than any master.' He said also to the divine Mary, 'This, your son, has no need of any learning\*."

The story recorded by Irenæus, and this in the Gospel of the Infancy, is evidently the same: and, as it appears from the express

\* I copy the translation of Mr. Jones, chap. xlviii.

testimony of this author, that it was the fabrication of the first Gnostics, it seems not improbable, that the book, which contains it, namely, the Gospel of our Saviour's Infancy, was their invention.

Secondly, The stile of *duplicity* and *mystery*, in which the first Gnostic teachers veiled their sentiments, and which characterises the gospel in question, proves, as appears to me, beyond controversy, that it came from their hands. That my reader may judge of the nature and force of this argument, it is necessary to place before him a passage or two, from the account, which Irenæus gives of their theological system.

“When wisdom was first separated from the Plenitude, she led a life of fervitude in dark and solitary places. Being remote from the light, she could apprehend nothing, but, like an abortion, was without consistence and form. But the superior Christ, feeling pity for her, invested himself with a form, which is according to substance and not according to knowledge. And, having done this, and collected into himself his own power, flew upwards, and left Wisdom, in order, that perceiving her own de-

gradation, she might, by the assistance of the Plenitude, be raised, in her views, to superior things, attracted by that odour of immortality, which the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, breathed upon her\*.”

Absurd and rhapsodical, as this passage may appear at first sight, yet, if we narrowly inspect it, the following rational meaning will be found at the bottom :—

*When human reason, or intelligence, first emanated from the Father of Lights, and was immersed in a corporeal form, it was compelled, on account of its weakness, to act in obedi-*

\* Of this, and the subsequent passage, I have, for the sake of brevity, given a very free translation. I have not, however, deviated from the meaning and spirit of the original. The Latin version is as follows :—Ea vero, quæ extra Pleroma dicuntur ab iis, sunt talia : Enthymesin illius superioris Sophiæ, quam et Achamoth vocant, separatam a superiore Pleromate cum passione dicunt, in umbræ et vanitatis locis deservisse per necessitatem : extra enim lumen facta est, et extra Pleroma informis et sine specie, quasi abortus, ideo quia nihil apprehendit. Misertum autem ejus superiorem Christum, at per crucem extensum, sua virtute formasse formam, quæ esset secundum substantiam tantum, sed non secundum agnitionem : et hæc operatum recurrere, subtrahentem suam virtutem, et reliquisse illam, uti sentiens passionem, quæ erga illam esset, per separationem Pleromatis concupiscat eorum quæ meliora sunt, habens aliquam odorationem immortalitatis, relictam in semet ipsa a Christo et Spiritu Sancto. Cap. vii. p. 19.



*ence to the passions : nor was it able, in the dark imprisonment of the body, to gain any sure systematic knowledge of its parent, nor effect a re-union with him. Heaven, however, in pity, condescended to assist the infirmities of the human understanding, and to give some information respecting the nature of God, and the final expectation of man. But the information which the first heavenly messenger brought to the human race, was partial and temporary, and delivered under the veil of symbolical rites and mystic language, rather than in explicit and intelligible terms. It was, however, sufficient to give them a faint hope of immortality, and thus induce them to the cultivation of superior virtue.*

In the subsequent chapter, Irenæus again writes thus:—"The Christ, having ascended to the Plenitude, was unwilling himself to come down a second time, to the Mother (or Wisdom spoken of above), but sent the *Paracletus*, or the Saviour, invested with all power, by the Father, and the other *Aeons*; so that all things,—thrones, divinities, and principalities, might be wrought in him. The Mother, on seeing him come with angels, his equals in age, veiled herself, on account of her shame: but when she saw him, and

all the fruits derived from him, she ran to him, deriving strength from his appearance: and he, having assumed a form according to knowledge, removed her perplexities and pain\*.”

This paragraph, divested of its symbolical representation, means as follows:—*The first communication of heaven to mankind, being imperfect, and not sufficiently explicit, another message was sent in the person of Jesus Christ, who, from the extraordinary endowments he had received from the Father, supplied the defects, and developed the meaning of the former. Human wisdom, however, was not willing to receive his claim, on his first appearance, but*

\* Cum igitur peragrasset omnem passionem mater ipsorum, et vix cum elata esset, ad obsecrationem conversa est ejus luminis, quod dereliquerat eam, hoc est, Christi, dicunt; qui regressus in Pleroma ipse quidem, ut datur intelligi, pigratus est secundo descendere; Paracletum autem misit ad eam, hoc est, Salvatorem, præstante ei omnem virtutem Patre, et omnia sub postestate tradente: et Æonibus autem similiter, uti in eo omnia conderentur visibilia, et invisibilia, throni, divinitates, dominationes. Mittitur autem ad eam cum coætaneis suis angelis. Hanc autem Achamoth reveritam eum dicunt, primo quidem copertionam imposuisse propter reverantiam: Deinde autem cum vidisset eum cum omni fructificatione sua accurrisse ei, virtute accepta de visu ejus. Et illum formasse cam formationem, quæ est secundum agnitionem, et curationem passionum fecisse ejus separantem eas ab ea, et non eas neglexisse. P. 22, 23.

*attempted to conceal, or to new-model the deformities of its own system. But being compelled, at length, to admit the truth of his divine mission, it was delivered from that obscurity and uncertainty, under which it before laboured. For the latter, unlike the former Christ, delivered his doctrines in plain, simple, and comprehensible language.*

From this account, if it be admitted as just, it appears, that by the first Christ, the Gnostics meant the Revelation, which God made by himself, under the Jewish dispensation: while the latter signifies that full and complete manifestation of his will, contained in the gospel\*.

I shall next place before you, a few passages from the Gospel of our Saviour's Infancy, in order to show, that it is penned in the same singular manner, and marked with that mystical ambiguity which veils the theological opinions of those impostors; in

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\* You will here observe, that the Christ which descended the *second time*, was not, according to the above representation, the same with the first. In other words, the Jewish and the Christian systems did not come from the same divine Author. Hence Origen says, that the heretics referred the Old and New Testaments to two different Gods. The passage will be cited in the sequel.

other words, you will see, that it is so composed, as to convey a sense false and absurd if literally, but rational and true when metaphorically interpreted:—

“ Again, on another day, the Lord Jesus was playing with some boys by a river, and they drew water out of the river by little channels, and made little fish pools. But the Lord Jesus had made twelve sparrows, and placed them about his pool, on each side, three on a side. But it was the Sabbath-day, and the son of Hanani, a Jew, came by, and saw them making these things, and said, Do ye thus make figures of clay on the Sabbath? And he ran to them, and broke down their fish pools. But when the Lord Jesus clapped his hands over the sparrows he had made, they fled away chirping.— Another time, when the Lord Jesus was coming home in the evening with Joseph, he met a boy, who ran so hard against him, that he threw him down; to whom the Lord Jesus said: As thou hast thrown me down so shalt thou fall, never again to rise. And that moment the boy fell down and died\*.

\* Chap. xlv.



This story is puerile and absurd enough; but it has, at the bottom, a rational signification. "*Jesus Christ chose twelve apostles, to testify the truth of what they had seen and heard. After he had blessed them, at his departure, they went and preached his gospel throughout the world.*" The representation here given is founded upon the very words of our Lord when he first commissioned his apostles: "Do not two sparrows sell for three farthings? Fear not, therefore, for ye are of more value than many sparrows." The boy who threw our Saviour down, and fell himself and died in consequence, means the disciple that betrayed him, and afterwards went and hanged himself\*. The author seems to allude to the words of John, who says, that when the traitor with the offi-

\* That Judas was the person here meant by the boy that threw Jesus down, is expressly asserted in chap. xxxv. "This same boy, who struck Jesus, and out of whom Satan went in the form of a dog, was *Judas Ischariot*, who betrayed him to the Jews."—Mark this curious declaration: *Satan went out of him in the form of a dog.* The *Cainists*, a sect of the Gnostics in Egypt, and as we have observed, the disciples of Judas, continued to worship the dog *Anubis*, after their pretended conversion to the Christian religion: for this reason they are distinguished, as we shall presently see, by the apostles, under the name of *dogs*. Satan, then, went out of the master only to enter into his scholars.

gers came to apprehend Jesus, they were struck to the ground; chap. xviii. 6.

Another curious specimen of that ambiguity in which this Gospel is written, is the following:—"On a certain time, the king of Jerusalem sent for Joseph, and said, I would have thee make me a throne, of the same dimensions with that place in which I commonly sit. Joseph obeyed; and forthwith began the work, and continued two years in the king's palace before he finished it. And when he came to fix it in its place, he found it wanted two spans, on each side, of the appointed measure: Which, when the king saw, he was very angry with Joseph; and Joseph, afraid of the king's anger, went to bed without his supper, taking not any thing to eat. Then the Lord Jesus asked him what he was afraid of? Joseph replied, because I have lost my labour in the work which I have been about these two years. Jesus said to him, 'Fear not, neither be cast down: Do thou lay hold on one side of the throne, and I will the other, and we will bring it to its just dimensions.' And when Joseph had done as Jesus said, and each of them had with strength drawn

his side, the throne obeyed, and was brought to the proper dimensions of the place\*.

The purpose of the above strange fiction is to this effect:—*Joseph had neither birth nor fortune, which might qualify his son to fill the throne of Judea; but his disqualification, in those respects, was removed by the supernatural powers with which he was endowed.*

I shall produce one instance more:—  
 ‘ And when the Lord Jesus was seven years of age, he was on a certain day with other boys, his companions, about the same age, who, when they were at play, made clay into several shapes, viz. asses, oxen, birds, and the like; each boasting of his work, and endeavouring to excel the rest. Then the Lord Jesus said to the boys, I will command those figures which I have made to walk. And immediately they moved; and when he commanded them to return, they returned. He had also made the figures of birds, and sparrows, which, when he commanded to fly, did fly; and when he commanded to stand still, did stand still: And if he gave them meat and drink, did eat and

\* Chap. xxxix.

drink. When at length the boys went away, and related these things to their parents, their fathers said to them, Take heed, children, for the future, of his company, for he is a sorcerer; shun and avoid him, and from henceforth never play with him\*."

The creation here ascribed to our Lord, signifies, *the new life of virtue, which, as it were, he breathed into those who became converts to his gospel; and who henceforth lived in obedience to his commandments: it being usual to denote different descriptions of men in their natural and idolatrous state, by OXEN, ASSES, BIRDS, FISHES †, &c.* The boys with

\* Chap. xxxvi.

† "Christ," says Clement, in his Address to the Greeks, "is the only one among all, whom we have yet heard of, that humanises into men the fiercest beasts; the frivolous being mere birds; the deceiving reptiles; the irascible lions; the voluptuous pigs; and the ignorant stones and logs of wood;" page 4. Compare with this description, Psal. xlviii. 12, 20.; Jer. v. 8.; Job ix. 12.; Gen. xl. 27, 17. The vision, which Peter saw, Acts x. 10—13, is particularly worthy of notice: "And he saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth. Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." By these, no doubt, were represented the different descriptions of Gentiles, that would receive the Christian religion.



whom he is said to be playing, mean those pretended divine teachers, contemporary with, or subsequent to, him; such as the scribes, the Pharisees, and the false prophets, of whom he speaks in the gospels. These could give to their followers only the form of rational beings, but were not able, like Jesus, to bestow eyes on the blind, or life on the dead.

It is unnecessary to adduce more examples. The reader is now able to understand the singular style in which this book is written: and he will, I trust, assent to the justice of the conclusion, that it is so like the language in which the Gnostics expressed their sentiments, as to point to them and no other, as the authors of this gospel. From the double interpretation of which it is capable, and from the studied artifice with which it is composed, we may see the propriety of the following remark made by Origen:—"I know a certain gospel, 'according to Thomas,' and 'according to Matthias,' and many other we read, that we may not seem to be ignorant of any thing for the sake of those, *who think they know something, if they are acquainted with those gospels* \*.

\* Lardner, vol. ii. p. 503.

The Gospel of the Infancy, went, at first, as we shall see immediately, under the name of *Thomas*, and it may be inferred from the above paragraph, that some persons prided themselves in understanding it. Does not this imply, that it contains a mysterious sense, which it requires some skill to unfold; and which is very different from the plain and literal signification?

It has just been observed, that this Gospel was stiled, 'according to Thomas', and a fragment of it is still extant under that name. It begins thus:—"I, *Thomas*, an Izraelite, judged it necessary to make known to our brethren among the Gentiles, the actions and miracles of Christ in his childhood, which our Lord and God Jesus Christ, wrought after his birth in Bethlehem, at which I myself was astonished \*."

In this paragraph there is one circumstance, which might lead one to conclude, that the Thomas here meant, so far from being Thomas the disciple of our Lord, who must have been incapable of such falsehoods, was not even a

\* This fragment is annexed to the Gospel of the Infancy, by Mr. Jones, vol. ii. p. 273.

*Jew*; for he calls himself an *Izraelite*, which, had he really been one of the *Izraelites*, he would not have done: as he would take it for granted, that his reader knew this; nor suspect, that any should think otherwise: whereas, it was very natural in a *Gentile*, that personated Thomas, to anticipate such a suspicion, on the part of his readers, and repel it by asserting, that he was Thomas the *Izraelite*.

Now, it has been shown from Plutarch, that one of the Egyptian Magi, who had become a professor, and a leader of Christianity, in Rome, was named **THAUMAS**; or according to our mode of writing it, *Thomas*. If then the Gospel of our Saviour's Infancy was, as has been proved, composed by some of the Gnostic leaders, who had originated in that city, is it not very probable, that the Thomas, whose name it bore, in former times, was no other than Thaumasp mentioned by Plutarch?

If then this book was the composition of Thaumasp, or at least of some of the Gnostics, who had come from Rome, it might be expected, that some of the events which occurred there, should be alluded to in it. And

this we shall find to be the case. In chapter ten we read thus : “ When Joseph was considering with himself about the journey, the morning came upon him. In the length of the journey the girts of the saddle broke. And now he drew near to a great city, in which there was an idol, to which the other idols and gods of Egypt offered their vows. And there was by this idol, a priest ministering to it, who, as soon as Satan spake out of that idol, related the things he said to the inhabitants of Egypt, and those countries. This priest had a son three years old, who was possessed with a great multitude of devils, who uttered many strange things : and when the devils seized him, went about naked, with his clothes torn, throwing stones at those whom he saw. Near to that idol was the inn of the city, into which, when Joseph and the divine Mary were come, and had turned into that inn, all the inhabitants of the city were astonished, and all the magistrates and priests of the idol assembled before that idol, and made enquiry there ; saying, What mean all this consternation and dread which have befallen upon our country ? The idol answered and said, The unknown God is come hither, who is truly God ; nor is there any one besides him, who is worthy of di-



vine worship : for he is truly the Son of God. At the fame of him, this country trembled, and, at his coming it is under the present commotion and consternation; and we ourselves are affrighted at the greatness of his power. And at the same instant, this idol fell down, and at his fall all the inhabitants of Egypt, besides others, ran together\*.”

From the facts already developed, we are enabled to see the meaning of the above paragraph, which, like every thing said in this Gospel, has some foundation in truth. The *great city* then, here mentioned, means the city of Rome, which was the greatest in the empire. Christianity, on its introduction there, gave rise to a great commotion among the inhabitants : And to this the following words seem to refer:—“At the fame of him this country trembled.”

Tiberius assembled the Philologers to know of them, Who Jesus was. A similar enquiry was doubtless made by other great men, and especially by the senate, who, as we have seen, interested themselves in the

\* Chap. x.

business. On this appears to be founded the ensuing clause:—"All the inhabitants of the city, and all the magistrates and priests of the idols, assembled before that idol, *and made enquiry there*; saying, what means all this consternation and dread, which have fallen upon all our country?"

Jesus was unknown to the emperor; but from the representation of the magicians he thought him to be a god, and proposed his deification to the senate. With this agrees the answer, which is given by the priest of the idol, "The unknown God is come hither, who is truly God."

The idol we are told, received the offerings and vows of the other idols of Egypt; that is, it was the supreme idol of that nation, which was the idol of *Isis*. But this idol Tiberius ordered to be pulled down, and thrown into the Tyber. See above, page 118. Hence appears the meaning of the succeeding words:—AND AT THE SAME INSTANT THE IDOL FELL DOWN\*.

\* Other idols fell at Rome about the time, in which that of *Isis* was thrown into the Tyber. This is mentioned by *Dio Cassius*, as being the case with the statue of *Janus*. Το του Ιαίου αγαλμα κατεπεσε. Lib. lvii. p. 615. The impostors

After the destruction of the idol, the Egyptians were expelled from the city. They then went, with most of the other Gentile converts, that left Italy, into their own country. This circumstance brings to light the signification of the next clause:—ALL THE INHABITANTS OF EGYPT, BESIDES OTHERS, RAN TOGETHER AT HIS FALL.

In order to impress the emperor with the belief, that the advent of Christ into the world was foretold by divine inspiration, they forged, we have already seen, certain prophecies (page 272), which they ascribed to the sibyl. With the predictions of the Jewish prophets those impostors were, no doubt, yet unacquainted; and, if they themselves had the knowledge of, and believed, the inspired penmen of Judea, it would, they knew, be useless to cite them before Tiberius, and others, who did not admit their divine authority. But to Zoro-

seem to have produced an oracle of the sibyl which pretended to foretel their destruction, and the destruction of Rome itself, about that time. If we may judge from the context of the above writer, this appears to have been the circumstance which induced Tiberius to examine the sibylline oracles. It was not unusual with those Christians, who had recourse to such impostures, to cite them as predicting the downfall of the heathen temples and idols. See Clem. Alexan. vol. I. p. 44.

aster the founder of magic, whose claims to inspiration they would much more readily allow, than those of the Jewish prophets, the learned at Rome were no strangers. It is natural, then, to suppose, that the Philologers would have availed themselves of their predeliction in his favour, and assert something like what is contained in the following paragraph:—"And it came to pass, when the Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem, a city of Judea, in the time of Herod the king, the wise men came from the East, *according to the prophecy of Zoroaster\*.*"

I shall only add, that in the following paragraph, there seems an allusion to the present, which Pauline made to the Jew and his associates:—"Then the divine Mary took one of the swaddling clothes, in which the infant was wrapped, and gave it to them instead of a blessing, *which they received from her as a most noble present.*"

It remains now for me to show, that the introductory chapters, ascribed to Matthew, have really been taken from the Gospel of

\* Chap. vii.



the Infancy of Jesus. The truth of this fact appears,

*First*, Because this Gospel was composed by those very men who fabricated the story of his miraculous birth.

*Secondly*, Because it was extant *before* the genuine Gospels; at least before that of Luke. In proof of this, we must produce what that Evangelist says in his introduction: "For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth, in order, a declaration of those things, which are surely believed, among us; even as they have delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the first, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

From this passage three things may be fairly inferred:—1. That many persons *before Luke* attempted to give a history of the life of Jesus.—2. That the gospels thus written, were of *no authority*, and little cal-

culated to give certainty to a person who wished to know the truth.—3. That Luke composed *his*, and addressed it to Theophilus, to prevent the evil effects of fraud and imposition. But whose were the false gospels, to which the Evangelist here refers? Learned men are generally agreed, that one of these was the Gospel of the *Egyptians*\*. But this famous gospel appears to me to have been only a counterpart of the Gospel of the Infancy: for these reasons:—the same men, viz. the Egyptian Gnostics, were the authors of both;—and among them both were in use. Hence we meet with a passage† in

\* This was the opinion of Erasmus, Grotius, Du Pin, Father Simon, Dr. Grabe, and Dr. Mills. They are cited by Mr. Jones, Vol. I. p. 248, 249.

† “Thence they proceeded to Memphis and saw Pharaoh, and abode three years in Egypt, and the Lord Jesus did very many miracles in *Egypt*, which are neither to be found in the Gospel of the *Infancy*, nor in the Gospel of *Perfection*,” chap. xxv. The Gospel of Perfection, as it here stands opposed to that of the Infancy of Jesus, means that of his Maturity. And, as the object of the former was to record the miracles done by him when a *child*, the design of the latter was to give the history of him when become a *man*. But the Gospel of the Infancy was composed by the Egyptian Gnostics: may we not conclude, then, that the Gospel of Perfection, which was no other than the famous Egyptian Gospel, was their composition? At least, it is certain that the authors of the Gospel of the Infancy used it. This is attested by Clement of Alexandria, who, in the fourth book of his *Stromata*, refutes their sentiments respecting

the Gospel of the Infancy, in which the Egyptian Gospel is alluded to in such a manner, as implies, that they had some connection with each other. If then the Egyptian Gospel were extant before that of Luke, we may infer, that the Gospel of the Infancy was so too. What will prove this beyond dispute is, the circumstance that the apostle Paul, as we shall see in the sequel, rebukes the Gospel fabricated by the Egyptian Gnostics, and places what he and the other apostles taught in opposition to it, as the only true and genuine doctrine. If this be true, the conclusion is certain, that the contents of the two first chapters of Matthew have been taken from it. I will select an extract, to show how similar the two accounts are to each other :—

“And it came to pass, that when the Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem, a city of

the unlawfulness of marriage. What Epiphanius says of the Egyptian Gospel, is deserving of attention, as the character he gives of it, answers precisely to the Gospel of the Infancy. Speaking of the *Sabellians*, he says, page 514, “They support their error from certain apocryphal writings, and especially from what is called *the Egyptian Gospel*. In that many things are related of the Saviour, which have a *latent and mystic meaning*.” This is no other than that style of duplicity and mystery which characterises the Gospel of the Infancy, and which points to the founders of the Gnostic sects as its authors.

Judea, in the time of Herod the king, the wise men came from the east to Jerusalem. And brought with them, offerings of gold frankincence and myrrh, and worshipped him. And, at the same time, there appeared to them, an angel in the form of that star, which had before been their guide, in their journey, the light of which they followed till they returned to their own country."

" But Herod perceiving that the wise men did delay, and not return to him, called together the priests and wise men and said, Tell me in what place the Christ should be born? And when they replied, In Bethlehem, a city of Judea, he began to contrive in his own mind the death of the Lord Jesus. But an angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph, in his sleep, and said, Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into Egypt, as soon as the cock crows; so he arose and went."

" At the end of three years, he returned out of Egypt, and when he came near to Judea, Joseph was afraid to enter; for hearing that Herod was dead, and that Archelaus reigned in his stead, he was afraid; and



when he went to Judea, an angel of God appeared to him and said, O! Joseph, Go into the city Nazareth, and abide there.\*

Thirdly, The *priority* of the Gospel of the Infancy to the account of our Lord's birth in Matthew, is demonstrated from the following circumstance. Irenæus says of the first Gnostics that, *while they used the same language, with the orthodox church, they thought differently*: † and Tertullian affirms, after him, that, if one would explore the meaning of their words to the bottom, it will be found that they rejected the common opinion, though they seem by their ambiguity to maintain it. ‡ These assertions might lead one to conclude, that those, who fabricated the Gospel of the Infancy, used such terms, as when taken in the plain, and literal sense, indicate the supernatural birth of Jesus, but, in a mystical and metaphorical view, teach the reverse. And this upon examination will appear to be fact.

“ In the three hundred and ninth year

\* Chap. vii. ix.

† Ομοια μὲν λαλοῦντες ἀνομοια δὲ φρονούντες, page 3, at the top.

‡ Si subtiliter tentes per ambiguitates bilinques communem fidem affirmant. De Valen. p. 25. B.

of the æra of Alexander, Augustus published a decree that all persons should go to be taxed, in their own country ; Joseph, therefore, arose, and with Mary his spouse went to Jerusalem, and then came to Bethlehem, that he and his family might be taxed, in the city of his fathers. And when they came by the cave, Mary confessed to Joseph, that her time of bringing forth was come, and she could not go on to the city, and said, Let us go into this cave. At that time the sun was very near going down. But Joseph hastened away, that he might fetch a midwife : And when he saw an old Hebrew woman, who was of Jerusalem, he said to her, Pray come hither, good woman, and go into that cave, and you will there see a woman, just ready to bring forth."

" It was then after sun set, when the old woman and Joseph with her reached the cave, and they both went into it. And behold ! it was all filled with lights, greater than the light of lamps and candles, and greater than the light of the sun itself. The infant was there wrapped up in swaddling clothes, and sucking the breast of his mother, the divine Mary.

When they both saw this light, they were surprized. The old woman asked the divine Mary, Art thou the mother of this child? The divine Mary answered, she was. On which the old woman said, Thou art very different from all other women. The divine Mary answered, As there is not any child like to my son, so neither is there any woman like to his mother. The old woman answered and said, O! my lady I am come hither, that I may obtain an everlasting reward. Then the divine lady Mary said to her, Lay thy hands upon the infant: which when she had done, she became clean; and, as she was going forth, she said from henceforth, all the days of my life, I will attend upon, and be a servant of this infant.”\*

Now, if we minutely examine the above extract, we shall find, that, while it seems a fabulous narrative of the birth of our Saviour, it is in reality, a true account of the manner, in which the Christian faith was blended with the Egyptian superstition by the Philologers, on its introduction into Rome.

\* Chap. ii. iii.

"And when they came by the cave, Mary confessed to Joseph, that her time of bringing forth was come, and she could not go on to the city, and said, Let us go into this cave." The cave\* here spoken of, means one of those *subterraneous holes*, in which the eastern sages were accustomed to celebrate their mysteries. The arrival, therefore, of Mary at the cave, and her de-

\* Here we see the origin of that opinion, maintained by the fathers that Jesus was born not in Bethlehem, but in a neighbouring *cave or den*. Porphyry in his life of *Pythagoras*, informs us, "That sage made a cave on the outside of the city, which he appropriated for his own philosophy, and in which he spent the greater part of his days and nights in conversation with his associates." page 12.

As the eastern philosophers, had places of this kind, where they delivered their sacred rites, we cannot be surprized at the following assertion of Eusebius, though every ingenuous person will feel indignant that such a falsehood should be attested by him, with the confidence of truth. "On the Mount of Olives, he says, There was a cave, in which according to a tradition, *which is very certain*, our Saviour communicated his most secret mysteries to his disciples." See Tillemont, vol. i. p. 43. whose words I have quoted. It is worthy of remark, that some of the Jewish leaders, when they saw the miracles of Jesus, inferred that he was a Magician, and that he frequented a place of this sort, where he had intercourse with evil demons. Of this class seems to have been the scribe, who thus accosted him, with the hope no doubt of being admitted to the celebration of his rites: "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." His reply, in part is "*Foxes have holes;*" that is, "*Cunning and deceitful men frequent subterraneous holes. I resort to no such places.*"



livery there of the child, signify that the Magicians received the Gospel, accommodated indeed to their previous notions of religion, by representing, in mystical language, the founder, as *a God*, and *supernaturally conceived*. It is remarkable that every time, the mother is mentioned, *before* she came to the cave, she is called simply *Mary*: but when she is brought there, and delivered of her son, she, ever after, has the epithet *divine*, annexed to her name.

“At that time the sun was very near going down.” Which literally is thus; *At that time, the sun was going rapidly into the west*:\* That is, The light, which shone in Jesus Christ, the great luminary of the moral world, was reflected far to the west of Judea, viz. *Rome*, when the Philologers corrupted his faith. Joseph did not enter the cave with his wife when she went to be delivered. Which signifies, that the Magicians represented Jesus, as supernaturally conceived, and not as the offspring of *Joseph*.

Joseph returns again with an *old Hebrew woman*, who was a native of Jerusalem, to

\* Sol autem in occasum præceps ferebatur.

assist at the birth of the child. This Hebrew woman means the *Jewish religion*, \* which is the mother of the christian system. Her coming back with Joseph, denotes, that he claimed Jesus, as his own legitimate son, and that the Jewish dispensation, and not the heathen theology, was to have the honour of ushering into life the Son of God.

“ When Joseph and the old woman went into the cave, behold ! it was all filled with lights greater than the light of lamps and candles, and greater than the light of the sun itself.” That is ; The philosophers, who embraced the new religion, moulded according to their own depraved notions, pretended to more of the light of worldly wisdom, more of the splendor of artificial philosophy, than those, who taught it in Judea, and even than the founder of Christianity himself.

“ The infant was there wrapped up in

\* *Judaism*, is personified and represented under the figure of a Hebrew woman, in the following paragraph of Clement. *The offspring of the ingenuous are numerous. The Hebrew woman, who formerly had many children, is become barren through disobedience.* A similar representation is given in Isaiah liv. 1.—6. Clem. Alexan. p. 8.

swaddling clothes, and sucking the breasts of his mother." By this is intimated, That the Gospel was, at first, concealed by the Magicians, under the vail of Egyptian duplicity, and received by that means an additional vigour and prevalence. "The old woman told the divine Mary, O! my lady, I am come here, that I may obtain an everlasting reward, from henceforth, all the days of my life, I will attend upon, and be a servant of this infant." Which is an acknowledgment, that the Jewish religion was subordinate to the Christian.

"The old woman laid her hands on the infant, and she became clean; that is, Judaism was delivered from the corruptions, into which it had fallen, in consequence of being improved, and perfected by the wisdom of Christ. This interpretation might be pursued farther: but what is here adduced is, I presume, sufficient to show, that the first teachers of the miraculous conception, while they seemed from the literal acceptance of their words, to inculcate that doctrine, Do in reality, if sifted to the bottom, teach the simple humanity and the natural birth of Jesus. The object of their artifice was to recommend the new reli-

gion to general reception, by concealing those parts, which gave offence to the pride of human wisdom and worldly grandeur: and it appears to me probable that whenever this end would be fully answered, it was the intention of the impostors to unmask the story and represent the matter in its true and simple light.\* But it happened in this as in other instances of deception, that the metaphorical signification, annexed

\* The conduct of the impostors in framing such a story is founded upon a pernicious maxim, which they had learned as the worshippers of the serpent, That it was lawful to tell falsehood, to promote the truth. The object they proposed, and the reasoning they used, on this subject, we shall notice in the sequel. I shall only observe that the mystical signification here given to the above paragraph will account for the seemingly contradictory fact, that the Gnostics, though they forged the tale of our Lord's supernatural birth, generally in aftertimes rejected it. Indeed from its first appearance many of those heretics believed it to be false, and held up the history of it, in its true point of light; namely, as a piece of *mythology*, that is, as a narrative, conveying a moral *occult* signification, different from the literal and external sense. In confirmation of this I have the authority of Theodoret, who in epistle 145 says; "Simon and Menander, Cerdon and Marcion, deny altogether the incarnation of Jesus, and call his birth of a virgin, a mythology." Those Gnostics, on the contrary, whose leaders were the impostors at Rome, maintained his supernatural birth; but as they supposed him to be a god, possessed of a body differing from other men, they said he was the son of Mary only in *appearance*, that is, he was in *reality* no more her son than he was the son of Joseph. See *Irenæus*, p. 33. and the words of *Theodoret* note first: I shall quote them on a future occasion,



to their words was overlooked or forgotten, and the literal alone retained. The conclusion then at which I arrive is this: The tale, exhibited in the introductory chapters, as the figurative meaning has been entirely discarded, must have been *subsequent* to the account, which we have in this spurious Gospel; and, therefore, copied from it as taken in the literal sense.

My next step is to show that the contents of the first two chapters of Luke, are taken from the *Gospel of Mary*. Before, I enter on this subject, I would recommend it to my reader to peruse what the learned *Jeremiah Jones* has said on this Gospel. From him he will learn; that the Gospel of the birth of Mary, and the *Protevangelion of James*, were originally *the same*, and probably the composition of the same author; that the author of it was some *Hellenistic Jew*; and that the Gospel of the Infancy, and that of the birth of Mary have always been joined together, from the beginning, as parts of the same book.\* This circumstance implies that the writers of them, though one a Jew and the other a Gentile, had some

\* Jones, volume II. p. 175—180—316—321.

acquaintance, and acted in concert with each other. But we have seen from Josephus, that an intercourse and a co-operation of this kind subsisted between the wicked Jew and the Egyptian Thaumias. May we not then infer that, as the former composed the Gospel of our Saviour's Infancy, that of the birth of Mary, came from the hands of the latter. Whether the justice of this inference, be admitted or not, it must still be allowed, that the Gospel of Mary claims the same high antiquity with the Gospel of the Infancy. It remains then to prove that the narrative in Luke is copyed from it.

In the Gospel of Mary's Birth, she is represented to have been a *perpetual virgin*; and Joseph is said to have espoused her, not that he might make her his wife, but be the guardian of her virginity.—“ And the High Priest said, Thou art the person, chosen to take the virgin of the Lord *to keep her for him.*”

Now if we examine attentively the account in Luke, we shall find that it *insinuates* this very thing, which is directly asserted in the spurious Gospel. Mary is

said to be only *espoused*\* to Joseph, who, though *nominally* her husband, yet preserved her a *virgin*. “And, in the ninth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a *virgin*, *espoused* to a man, whose name was Joseph.” Again in the second chapter it is said, “Joseph also went up from Galilee with Mary his *espoused* wife.

The impostors were afraid to say openly, that Mary was not really married to Joseph, as this would be a falsehood notorious to all in Judea. They insinuate however, that she was only so far his wife as to have been espoused to him, but that she never violated her virginity by an intercourse with her reputed husband.

The angel according to the narrative in Luke, thus accosted Mary, “Behold ! thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name *Jesus*. He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest, and the Lord shall give unto him, the throne of his father David, and he

\* There is some reason to believe says Tillemont, that the Gospel makes use of the word *betrothed*, only to signify that she ceased not to be a *virgin*. Vol. I. 378. N. viii.

shall reign over the house of Jacob, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

If you attentively consider, this paragraph you will find in it, nothing that could lead Mary to suppose that her son, thus promised to be the Messiah, whom the Jews expected, was to be conceived in a supernatural manner. And yet, she is represented as making this absurd reply to the angel, "*How can this be, seeing that I know not a man!*" The circumstance of her conceiving without a man, must have been so remote from her comprehension, that she could scarcely have understood it, though it had been asserted in the plainest and most direct terms. How, then, could she infer such an event, from a language, which gave no idea of it? The conclusion natural for her to have made, was, That, when it pleased God, she should be married, a son would be born to her, whom the Almighty was to raise to the throne of David. But attend to the tale as it is related in the Gospel of Mary. "Fear not Mary—For you have found favour with the Lord, because you have made virginity your choice: Therefore, *while you are a virgin* you shall conceive without sin and bring forth a son. He



shall be great, because he shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth: and he shall be called the son of the highest: for he, who is born of mean state on earth, reigns in an exalted one in heaven: and the Lord shall give him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. To this discourse of the angel Mary replied, "*How can that be: For seeing, that according to my vow, I never knew any man, how can I bear a child without the addition of a man's seed?*"\*

The angel, you see, tells Mary, in this address, that she should conceive, *while a virgin*, who had vowed to continue so. The answer, she makes, is therefore very natural and consistent; while, as it stands, at present, in our Evangelist, it is as destitute of reason and consistence, as it is of truth. What then are we to conclude? What but this? That the story in Luke has been copied from that, in the spurious Gospel; and that the copyists, fearing to say too much, lest they should be detected, have so curtailed the account, as to fall into that absurdity and

\* Vol. II. p. 115, Chap. ix.

incoherence, which sometimes escape the most sagacious impostors.

I shall give but one instance more. *Tacitus* writes thus:—"A decree was passed by the senate, that four thousand of the libertine race of Jews, infected with that superstition, and capable of bearing arms, should be transported into the island of Sardinia; there to be restrained from robberies: and had they perished there, through the severity of the climate, the loss would not have been great. The rest were to depart from Italy; unless within an appointed day, they laid aside their profane rites. After these things Cæsar moved, that a virgin should be chosen in the room of *Occia*, who for seven and fifty years had with the utmost chastity presided over the sacred vestals."\*

One might conclude from this passage, that *Occia* became a convert to the new religion, and that she departed with the Jews and Egyptians, expelled by the emperor. I draw this inference: Because the historian connects her with their departure:

\* Post quæ, retulit Cæsar capiendam Virginem in Locum *Occiæ*, quæ, septem et quinquaginta per annos, summa sanctimonia Vestalibus Virginibus præsiderat. An. Lib. II. Cap. 86.

shall be great, because he shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth: and he shall be called the son of the highest: for he, who is born of mean state on earth, reigns in an exalted one in heaven: and the Lord shall give him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. To this discourse of the angel Mary replied, "*How can that be: For seeing, that according to my vow, I never knew any man, how can I bear a child without the addition of a man's seed?*" \*

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Because he does not say what became of her, when another was chosen to fill her place. And, lastly, his words may be considered, as expressing a mixture of surprise and indignation. As if he had said, "It is wonderful that Occia, after having conducted herself, with the utmost chastity, for the long period of fifty seven years, should have left her former honourable station, and gone off with a people, infected with a new superstition, and infamous for their vices." \*

\* As the impostors represented the mother of our Lord to be a perpetual virgin, they were under the necessity of inventing some falsehood or other, to account for the circumstance that he had *brothers* and *sisters*; The most specious invention for this purpose was to say that Joseph was *old*, when he espoused the virgin Mary; that he had been married before, and that those children were all by his first wife, and consequently but half-brothers and sisters to our Lord. Now, as this was a mere fiction, the imagination of the person, who first wrote the story or first invented the tale, that Joseph had a former wife, was likely by the mere impulse of association, to fix upon the original woman, from whom the idea of Mary's virginity was copied. And this appears to have been fact. Jerome writes thus on *Matthew* xii. 49. "Those, who say that the brethren of the Lord were children of Joseph by another wife, follow the extravagant fictions of some apocryphal books, and who feign, that her name was *Escha*."

Here you see, it is asserted, that those, who maintained the above position, did it on the authority of some spurious writings. These spurious writings must mean the Gospels of Mary's Birth and of our Saviour's Infancy, where the same

If this conclusion be true, and if the Gospel in question be the composition of the wicked Jew, at Rome, it may be easily imagined, that in describing *Anna*, who is here said to be the mother of Mary, he should copy some features, from the character of *Occia*, a woman, so distinguished by her rank and profession. In other words, we may expect that the fictitious *Anna*, will be found to be no other than the real *Occia*.

Now read the following passage, which human fraud has dared to insert among the records of divine truth: "And Anna, a prophetess, a daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser, far gone in years, who had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, a widow about eighty four years old; who departed not from the temple, paying religious service, night and day, with fastings and prayers: She also came up, at the same time, and continued giving thanks unto the Lord, and speaking of

thing is related (Jones Vol. II. p. 171) though the name of Joseph's supposed former wife is not, for an obvious reason, there mentioned. But the woman, which the forgers had in view was *Occia*; and it appears from the above extract that those, who followed their authority, called her *Escha*, which is evidently the same name.

the child to all, that were expecting deliverance in Jerusalem."

The first remark here to be made is, that the Anna, spoken of in the above paragraph, is the same with her, who in the spurious Gospel is represented, as the mother of Mary. Hence we see the reason, of the testimony, she bears to Jesus, as the expected Messiah. As she was his grandmother, she felt peculiar interest in his exhibition at Jerusalem, and in recommending him to general reception. But by the fictitious Anna, the impostors, as we have inferred, merely meant the vestal Occia. And this inference is confirmed by the similarity of the two characters. Occia, as Tacitus asserts, was *a virgin*, and spent the greatest part of her life in the Temple, and, as she was concerned in sacred things, and had presided over the vestal virgins, assumed, of course, the character of a *prophetess*. With this character, and profession, the account given of Anna remarkably agrees: "Anna a prophetess who departed not from the temple paying religious service, night and day, with fastings and prayers."

The spurious Gospel represents Anna

as having been several years married to Joachim, before she conceived *Mary*. Hence we see the meaning of the following clause, which, as it stands, in the genuine Gospel, is quite unintelligible: "*Anna, a prophetess, far gone in years, who had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity.*" That is to say, She was old, when she was married (for Occia lived a virgin, till her fifty seventh year, when probably she changed her condition.) and she spent seven years *from* her virginity, that is, *after* she had laid aside her virginity and before she brought forth her daughter *Mary*. That I may not be thought fanciful, in the above statement, I will here subjoin a remarkable coincidence, which proves that Anna and Occia mean the same woman. According to the Roman historian, she lived a vestal virgin fifty seven years. She must therefore have been *sixty-three*, when she left the temple, and went off with the Egyptian converts; since she was not eligible to that profession before her *sixth year*\*. If, then, she was sixty-three when she left the temple, and married to Joachim according

\* Consult *Adam's*, or *Kennet's Roman Antiquities*, under the article *Vestal Virgins*.



to the author of the false gospel, under the name of Anna, she must have been seventy, when, seven years afterwards, she brought forth Mary. But, we are told, in the same book, that Mary was betrothed to Joseph in her fourteenth year \*, about which time, she conceived Jesus. Consequently she was *eighty-four*, at the period of our Lord's presentation in Jerusalem. And this calculation exactly agrees with what we read in Luke:—"She was a widow of about *four-score and four years*."

The preceding enquiry will enable us to account for the following letter, written by Jerome, respecting the gospels in question:—"To the Bishops Cromatius and Heliodo-

\* "But the Virgin of the Lord, as she advanced in years, increased also in perfections, and according to that of the Psalmist, Her father and mother forsook her, but the Lord took care of her. For she every day had the conversation of angels, and every day received visions from God, which preserved her from all sorts of evil, and caused her to abound with all good things; so that at length, when she arrived at *her fourteenth year*, as the wicked could not lay any thing to her charge worthy of reproof, so all good persons, who were acquainted with her, admired her life and conversation. At that time the high priest made a public order, that all the virgins, who had public settlements in the temple, and were come to their age, should return home, and, as they were now of a proper maturity, should, according to the custom of their country, endeavour to be married;" cap. vii.

rus\*, most blessed and holy lords, Jerome, a humble servant in Christ, sendeth greeting. He, who digs the earth conscious of gold, does not instantly snatch away what the lacerated clods may pour forth; but before the brandished iron turns up the glittering mass, he pauses awhile over the green turfs, which are to be removed, and feeds himself with hope, no less than with actual gain. An arduous work is enjoined upon me; since your blessedness commands me (to translate) a book, which the holy Matthew himself, an apostle and evangelist, was unwilling to make public. For, if this was not to be kept secret, he would have prefixed it to the gospel which he has published. But this little book he composed in Hebrew characters, and, thus sealed up, delivered it to the public, in order that a book written in Hebrew letters, might be obtained by the most religious; who from their own times might hand it down to posterity

\* This letter is rendered in English by Mr. Jones, vol. II. 124. It may be found in Jerome's large Works, tom. 7, 8, 9 page 635. The supposition of some critics that it never came from the hand of this writer is not worthy of attention. The single circumstance that Jerome employed his labour to translate the book, to which it refers, is a sufficient proof that he is also the author of the letter.

through successive ages. But the contents of this book, which was never intended to be entrusted to any other (than the most faithful) they related in very different ways. But it happened that the publication of it, by one Seleucus, a disciple of Manes, who also composed a false Acts of the Apostles, furnished matter to pull down, rather than edify, the church, and accordingly was adjudged by a certain synod to be unworthy of its attention. Let then those snarling men cease to bite: we are not super-adding this book to the canonical scriptures, but translate the writings of an evangelist and apostle, in order to detect the fallacies of heresy. In doing this, we do not so much obey the pious bishops as oppose impious heretics\*.

\* The heretics, to whom Jerome here refers, were those, that denied the miraculous birth of Jesus, and maintained that the Christ descended upon him after his baptism. They were the followers of Cerinthus, Colorbarsus and Marcion. In order to prove that Jesus had a divine power, before that period, Jerome brings forward the miracles, which, in this gospel, he is said to have performed, while yet a child. Epiphanius throws much light on this epistle of Jerome, as to his object in translating it. After asserting in the most positive manner, that our Lord wrought his first miracle in Cana of Galilee, he presently recalls himself, and affects to credit his juvenile miracles, and adds: "It was fit that those things should have been done by Jesus, while yet a boy, that no pretext might be left for those he-

On this famous Epistle it is necessary to make a few remarks :—The author asserts positively, that the two gospels, which constituted the book in question, were the composition of the evangelist Matthew, and that it was delivered down to posterity as *his*. Of this tradition the reason is now very obvious. The men, that copied the story of our Lord's birth from the Gospel of his Infancy, and inserted it in Matthew, would naturally say, that the *original*, as well as the copy, was his production. By that means, they were most likely to secure the credit of the story, though the insertion of it, in the genuine Gospel, should be discovered.

Again, in the foregoing letter, it is said, that Matthew intended the book should be *kept secret*\*, that it should be entrusted to none but

resies, which say the Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove, after his baptism." Vol. I. 442.

\* We may here see the meaning of *Gregory Nyssen*, when he speaks of the *secret history* of the Virgin. See *Tillemont*, vol. I. p. 374. This last author refers to p. 346 *De Nativitate Christi* of the former. *Epiphanius* calls these gospels, *Jewish traditions*, invented by the *Ebionites*, or Nazarene Christians. His object was to screen himself and his fellow-impostors, from the accusation of forgery, by imputing it to his adversaries; on the same principle that a thief charges another with theft, in order, by that means, to shelter his own character from suspicion.



the most faithful, and that these handed it down from one generation to another. Now these are assertions no less remarkable in themselves, than conformable to fact. From the first fabrication of these gospels to the age of Jerome, they were kept in profound secrecy. Neither Justin Martyr, nor Irenæus, nor Tertullian, nor Clement of Alexandria, has taken any notice of them, though they appear from facts, which they copied from them, to have been well acquainted with their existence and contents. This is a singular circumstance; and nothing will account for it, but the fact, that the narratives of our Saviour's birth, now extant in the genuine records, were taken from these Gospels; and that the above writers were all well aware of the forgery. Had they brought them to light, or made the same use of them as Jerome and others of his time did, the fraud would have been detected: and this is what they were sensible of. They had, therefore, the prudence, or rather the cunning, to pass over them in silence. But the lapse of four hundred years, as it had obliterated from the generality of men, all knowledge of the original forgery, and its base authors, permitted the champions of imposture to act differently from their pre-

deceivers. Accordingly we see the author of this letter stepping forward, and, with a fraud equalled only by audacity, imposing upon the ignorance and credulity of the age in which he lived, as the production of an holy evangelist, writings, which he well knew originated in Egyptian falsehood and duplicity.

Finally, we may see the reason why the contents of the two spurious gospels, above examined, have been received and attested as true, by the advocates of the divinity and miraculous conception of Jesus in every age of the church. Thus Origen, Tertullian, and others, state it as matter of fact, though they dared not to produce their authority for such assertions, that Christ was born in a *neighbouring cave*, and not in the town of Bethlehem; that his brothers and sisters were the children of Joseph by a former wife; and that Herod murdered Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, in the entrance of the temple\*. When the progress of time

\* See the *Protevangelion*, chap. xxiii. The account of his murder by Herod is, in part, as follows: "Zacharias was murdered, in the entrance of the temple and altar, and above the partition; but the children of Israel did not know when he was killed. Then at the hour of salutation the priests went into the temple:

rendered it safe to bring those gospels to light, the supporters of error and superstition, even while they were afraid to maintain their genuineness, persisted in asserting and propagating the truth of those things which they contain. Hence we see the opinions,

but Zacharias according to custom did not meet them, and bless them, yet they still continued waiting for him to salute them; and when they found that he did not, in a long time, come, one of them ventured into the holy place, where the altar was, and he saw blood lying on the ground, congealed; when, behold! a voice from heaven said, Zacharias is murdered, and his blood shall not be washed away until the Revenger come."

Observe, now, how exactly Tertullian has copied this narrative, "*Zacharias inter altare et ædem trucidatur, perennes cruoris sui maculas silicibus adsignans,*" p. 493. D. On reading the above account of Zacharias in the temple you will anticipate me in the remark, that what we read of this same Zacharias, in the first chapter of Luke, is taken from it. But my principal object is to observe, that the circumstance of these chapters being copied from the spurious gospels, will serve to detect a glaring forgery in Matthew xxiii. 35. The impostors, who inserted the story in the genuine records, in order to give the colour of truth to the fiction of Zacharias's death, took away the words, *Son of Jehoiada* and the rest of the citation, which our Lord made from 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21. and put in their room, the following clause from the gospel of Mary; *Son of Zacharias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar*. On the authority of Jerome, we are assured that the gospel, which the Jewish Christians used, and, which we shall presently see, was the gospel of Matthew in its original and genuine state, had instead of *Son of Barachias, Son of Jehoiada*. In evangelio, quo Nazaræni utuntur, pro filio Barachiæ, filium Jehoiadæ scriptum reperimus. *Comment. in loco*. And this appears to me a sufficient proof of the forgery.

that Mary was the daughter of Joiachim and Anna, that she was conceived in their advanced age, that miracles attended her birth, that she was devoted by her parents for the service of the temple, and, that though espoused to Joseph, she continued a virgin through life \*, prevail in the catholic church through successive generations, almost to the present day.

In an enquiry concerning the origin and truth of the miraculous birth of Jesus, the sentiments of the ancient Jewish christians ought not in propriety to be omitted. The investigation of their belief on the subject will form the next step in our progress. And here we shall meet with additional evidence that the introductory chapters in Matthew never came from him.

Matthew addressed his gospel to the Jewish believers, and composed it solely for their use. This is a fact attested by all an-

\* Some of the later fathers have gone so far as to say that the Virgin did not *die*, or that after her death she rose again. Read, if you have leisure, the *History of the Blessed Virgin by Tilletmont*. You will there meet with sad instances of that latitude in error into which men will be carried, when they once deviate from the straight path of truth.



cient writers, and allowed, I believe, by most modern critics; nor can it indeed well be called in question, as it is supported by abundance of internal evidence. A few instances in corroboration of it, the reader may be pleased to see pointed out:

1. Matthew, in as much as he wrote for a people, who well understood the meaning, and readily admitted, the authority of the Jewish prophets, applies to our Lord as the Messiah, their predictions, more frequently than either of the other evangelists\*.

2. In the Gospel according to Matthew†, Christ cites, or alludes to certain maxims of the Mosaic law, which citations and allusions are not preserved with equal fidelity in the Gospels of Mark and Luke. To this it may be added, that he is represented by the former, as reasoning from customs and opinions peculiar to the Jews, much oftener than by the latter historians.

3. The impartiality which the Christian

\* Matthew iv. 15, 16. xii. 19. xxi. 5. xxiii. 35, xxvii. 35.

† Matthew ix. 13. xii. 7. Compare these with Mark ii. 28. Luke v. 5. Compare again Matthew xix. 28. with Mark x. 30. Luke xviii. 29.

system enjoins, and the magnanimity, which it inspires, required of Matthew to record with impartiality, all those evils, that his Master had foretold, would befall the nation, on account of its sins; the severe reprehensions which he had passed on the scribes and Pharisees, for their vices, together with the defects he had pointed out in the Mosaic religion, and the improvements proposed in his own. Accordingly, several chapters in this gospel are employed in the narrative of what Christ delivered on these subjects. This is a prominent feature, which distinguishes the Gospel of Matthew from that of Mark. The odium that prevailed in Rome, where this latter evangelist published his gospel, against his countrymen, and their system, and the partiality on the other hand, which he cherished for both, induced him to omit them altogether.

Now the conclusion, which forces itself on our attention, from the consideration, that Matthew addressed his gospel to the Hebrew converts, is this :—He must then have composed it in *the Hebrew tongue*\*.

\* The question in what language Matthew published his gospel has been discussed, with much variety of opinion, by modern critics. Lightfoot, Michaelis, Wakefield, and others patronize the

I mean, that dialect of it, which was, at the time, commonly used in Judea. This inference appears in my judgment, unavoidable : for it is inconceivable, that a writer, who, as Irenæus says of him, eagerly desired to reform the manners and improve the understandings of his countrymen, should address them in a foreign and unknown language.

Would an Englishman, residing in England, publish in French, a book, for the express use of his fellow-subjects, in which they were all, learned and unlearned, deeply and equally concerned? Or would a native of Wales, address the inhabitants of that country, in any other than the Welch tongue, on a subject of high importance to them? To suppose this, would be absurd; nor can it be less absurd to suppose, that Matthew wrote to the Jewish people in any other than the Jewish language. For it cannot, I presume, be affirmed, that Greek was then so prevalent in Judea, and so well understood by the common people, as English

tradition of the fathers, that he wrote it in the then Vernacular tongue of Judea ; while, Lardner, Jortin, Le Clerc, Wetstein and many besides, decide for the opinion, that he composed it in the Greek language. See Lard. vol. 6. 60—65.

is at present in Wales, or even French in England.

This argument receives additional force from the concurrent testimony of the fathers; who say, that Matthew did compose his gospel in the Hebrew dialect\*: and to this testimony is due, it appears to me, the highest credit, as they had no motive to concur in a falsehood; the bias, on the contrary, will presently seem to be on the other side.

Nor can it be objected to this, that the present Greek text carries no internal evidence of its being *a translation*, which my argument supposes: for this evidence could only appear from a minute comparison of it with the original. But, in the case before us, such a comparison is precluded by the loss of the original. Nor would it be a concession of any weight, were I to grant what is sometimes maintained, that the Gospel of Matthew is marked by those characters of unlaboured ease and simplicity, which distinguish the others. For, though the gospels of Mark, Luke, and John, were confessedly written in Greek, they ought, never-

\* These testimonies are cited by Lardner, vol. vi. p. 49—52.



theless, to be considered as little better than translations from the Hebrew: since they are only so many different specimens of Hebrew ideas, dictated and arranged in the Hellenistic dialect. And are we to infer, that the Gospel of Matthew is not a translation, because it exhibits those qualities which characterise compositions, that may be deemed but a species of translations?

It must not, however, be allowed, that no marks of its being a translation can be discerned in the present Greek text of Matthew. For it has a stile more figurative; it abounds with stronger allusions, with bolder personifications, and contains more numerous comparisons and parables than the other gospels. These peculiarities, which a translator could not but in part preserve, are owing, I conceive, to the genius of the Jewish language, which, on account of its high antiquity, is formed, more than any other, upon objects of sense; and for this reason, invests, in a proportionally greater degree, whatever ideas it expresses, with images borrowed from material things. To this it may be added, that the original identical words, which our Lord had used, are seldom preserved in this gospel; whereas they occur

frequently in that of Mark \*. Now the contrary of this might fairly be expected, had Matthew written in the Greek tongue, and addressed a people like himself prejudiced in favour of the Hebrew language. On the contrary, the fact is easily accounted for, on the supposition, that the evangelist had penned his history in this tongue. For a translator, being uninfluenced by the prejudice of the original writer, would, of course, decline retaining the original words; excepting where the want of corresponding terms, having equal import, rendered it necessary †. It is worthy of remark, finally, that Matthew, for the most part, expresses that kingdom of peace and righteousness to be established by the Messiah on the earth, by those terms, which denominate it in the Jewish writings; whereas the other evangelists have deviated from this phraseology, and generally stile it, not *the kingdom of hea-*

\* Compare Mat. xv. 5. with Mark vii. 11. Again, Mat. i. 25. with Mark v. 41.; Mat. xix. 33. with Mark x. 51.

† The word *Racha* is an instance of this kind; no other language having an equivalent name fully to express its signification: for this reason it is retained in all modern versions. "It is a word," says Lightfoot, "used by one that despiseth another with the highest scorn." Light. in Mat. v. 22.

*ven*, but *the kingdom of God*. This diversity of representation would not, it is probable, have taken place, had Matthew written in the same language with them.

Whatever weight these considerations may have upon the reader, still the conclusion, it is maintained, is irresistible that, as our inspired penman composed his narrative for the Jews, he must have composed it in the Jewish language: And this conclusion is farther confirmed by the fathers, who agree in this fact, though it has a tendency to overthrow their own darling opinion respecting the birth and person of Christ.

Now we find, that the first Jewish believers, to whom this historian addressed his gospel, had the name of *Nazarenes*. This denomination was applied to them by their enemies, because their Master came from the despised town of Nazareth; and we shall presently see that they too willingly adopted it, in order to distinguish themselves from those christians among the Gentiles, who falsely maintained that he was born at *Bethlehem*.

But the Jewish converts were soon called by another name, which was equally igno-

minious. They were stiled *Ebionites*, a term expressive of their *poverty*, and applied to them in contempt of it.

But the Ebionites are supposed by the generality of modern critics, not to have been the same with the Nazarenes, or the great body of the Jewish christians; but a sect, whom an intemperate zeal for the Mosaic law, had separated into a distinct society. But this opinion, I am free to say, has no foundation in truth: And my reasons for it are the following\* :—

1. The early christian writers, such as Irenæus†, Origen, and Eusebius, who speak

\* I am the more confident in this assertion, as Dr. Priestley, in his *History of Early Opinions*, (vol. iii. lib. 3. c. 8.) has clearly proved that the Nazarenes and Ebionites were the same people.

† Vide Irenæus, p. 102, where he describes their sentiments; and p. 358, where he attempts to refute them. It is deserving of notice, that this writer never applies the title of *Nazarenes* to any of the Jewish believers. His reason was, that he knew this to be the name by which the first christian society, with Jesus at their head, were distinguished. Common decency, therefore, if nothing else could, restrained him from branding the Jewish converts as heretics, under the denomination which they had in common with Christ and his apostles. As to Origen, says Dr. Priestley, "His testimony is clear and decisive



of the Jewish believers, have no where noticed such a distinction between the Nazarenes and Ebionites: on the contrary, they apply to the Hebrew converts the common denomination of Ebionites, without the smallest intimation that they were different sects of christians. But this difference, they would most certainly have marked, had there been any foundation for it in truth: since the sentiments of the Ebionites concerning the birth and person of Jesus, were opposite to their own; and, as they were the sentiments of a people, who had every opportunity to know the truth, no method could have proved so likely to counteract and overthrow them, as to oppose to them the opinion of the other Jewish converts, separated from the former under the appropriate name of Nazarenes. This argument receives an additional weight from Jerome\*, who gives the title of Nazarenes

to this purpose: He says, that the word *Ebion*, in the Jewish language, signifies *poor*, and those of the Jews, who believe Jesus to be the Christ are called *Ebionites*." Ear. Opin. vol. iii. p. 166. See also his book against Celsus, where he divides the Jewish believers into two classes, and calls each class *Ebionites*. Lib. v. p. 232. In the next page the Doctor adds, "Eusebius gives the very same account of the two sorts of Ebionites, and makes no mention of any Nazarenes as differing from them." Euseb. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 27. p. 121.

\* See Dr. Priestley, p. 169—180.

to those, whom Origen and others call Ebionites.

2. That the names of Ebionites and Nazarenes were but two different appellations of the same people, appears from Augustine, who says, that the *Symmachians*\* were Nazarenes; but *Symmachus* is well known to have been an Ebionite: the Symmachians, or Nazarenes, therefore, were Ebionites too.

3. Theodoret says, that Irenæus wrote against the Nazarenes; but, Irenæus has written against the Jewish christians under the name of Ebionites, consequently, according to these writers, the Ebionites and Nazarenes were the same people†.

4. From the account, which Epiphanius has given of the origin of the Ebionites, we may conclude, that they were the very same

\* Lard. vol. iii. p. 307. Tillemont, vol. ii. p. 86.

† I assert this on the authority of Tillemont, (vol. ii. p. 83). His words are these, "Theodorit says, that S. Justin, S. Irenæus, and Origen, wrote against the Nazaræans. And yet we do not perceive that either S. Irenæus or Origen have spoken expressly of them; but confuting the Ebionites was confuting them."

with those Jews, whom the apostles converted to the christian faith, and, who in the Acts, are called Nazarenes. "They call themselves *poor*," says that writer, "because, in the times of the apostles, they sold their property, and laid it at the feet of the apostles\*". If then they were converted by the apostles, and, if they gave up their property to them, they must have been the very persons spoken of in the Acts; and these certainly formed the sect of the Nazarenes.

5. Since it appears from the preceding paragraph, that the Jewish converts were reproached by their adversaries under the name of Ebionites, even early in the times of the apostles, we might expect in their writings some allusions to such a reproach: And in this expectation, if I be not mistaken, we shall not, on enquiry, be disappointed. The Apostle Paul, for instance, seems to allude to it, when he enumerates the several ignominious points of light in which he and his fellow-labourers were placed by their enemies, "As unknown, though well known; as deceivers, yet true; as dying, and behold we live; as severely treated, yet

\* Epiphan. vol. i. p. 141. A.

not destroyed; as sullen, though always rejoicing; AS POOR, YET ENRICHING MANY;" 2 Cor. vi. 8—10. Here you see Paul represents the Jewish believers, together with the apostles, as vilified under the appellation of *poor*, which is the signification of the word (*Aebiounim*) *Ebionites*. That this was a term of reproach appropriated to the followers of Jesus, appears evident from the circumstance of the writer subjoining another clause, in order to explain the meaning of it, "*as having nothing, though possessing all things.*" Examine also Rom. xv. 26. Gal. ii. 10. James ii. 2, 3, 5, 6. In 2 Cor. viii. 9. the same author has these remarkable words, "Ye know the kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich, he, on your account, became poor, that in his poverty ye might be made rich." The Hebrew verb *Aebelh*, from which the term *Aebioun*, *Ebionite*, is taken, signifies to *will*, or, to *do a thing with a willing mind*. Hence the above clause might thus be rendered:—*He being rich, willingly became an EBION on your account*; that is, he, of his own accord, assumed the condition of a man, that was poor, and a man, too, that was despised on account of his poverty. That the apostle had the ori-



ginal sense of the word in his mind, may be inferred from what he immediately adds, by way of exhortation to the Corinthians, to follow our Lord's example :—" Now, therefore, perform the doing of it, that as there *was a readiness to will*, so there may be a performance also, out of that which you have."

The later fathers ascribe the origin of the Jewish christians to one *Ebion* ; but so vague is the manner in which they speak of him, that modern critics are agreed, that such a person never really existed. This is a remarkable fact : but it is a fact, which receives an obvious solution from the above passage. There it is said, that Jesus *became, or was*, an *Ebion*. As the title of Ebionites was applied to the Nazarene sect in general, that of *Ebion* must have been appropriated to the founder of them, that is, Ebion and Christ was the same person. But the Christ of the Jewish believers was born at Nazareth ; whereas that of the Gentile converts was a God that came down from heaven, and received his birth at Bethlehem. While the early christian writers were restrained by a sense of decency, and something like the love of truth, from thus distinguishing be-

tween Christ and Ebion, Epiphanius \* had the courage to make the necessary distinction, and having thus separated the former, he lets loose upon the latter all the rage of malice and calumny. If then the matter stood as is here stated, no wonder that he and others who speak, have not been particular in their account of him. I shall only add, that by Ebion, Epiphanius must mean the Son of Joseph of Nazareth; for he says, that that man was the founder of the Ebionites †; but it will appear, in the sequel, if it do not appear already, that the founder of that sect was, beyond all dispute, the founder of christianity.

So inconsistent were the enemies of our Lord and his followers, that, while they sometimes vilified them, *as poor*, yet at other times, they affected to speak of their new profession as a mere artifice to enrich them-

\* Tertullian in his treatise *De Virginibus Velandis*, makes mention of *Hebion*; but he applies this name to the *Jewish believer*, who rejected the tale of Jesus being born of a virgin, p. 176. Mosheim, therefore, is mistaken, when he says, that the above writer speaks of him as *the founder* of the Ebionites. See his *Commentaries*, p. 331. The honour of this representation must, if I am not mistaken, be left to Epiphanius, as its original author.

† See vol. i. p. 125.

selves. This charge Philo, in a book, which he wrote in defence of the disciples of Jesus, in Egypt, has noticed; and he repels it with that high-toned eloquence, which a great and good man never fails to display, when called, in a trying emergence, to plead the cause of truth and innocence. "Is it not," says he, "irrational, and replete with impudence, or madness, or something else, which, from its enormity, wants a name, to say that those men are *rich*, who are most destitute, and in want even of common necessities; lead a sorrowful and afflicted life; voluntarily submit to famine themselves, in order to supply the public with plenty, and feed on the ethereal breath of virtue as grass-hoppers, they say, feed alone on air\*."

\* While the generous provisions, which the poorer classes of the Jewish converts received, gave their enemies the opportunity of saying, that they embraced christianity for the sake of sharing in the common benefit; so the unrivalled generosity of the wealthy believers, which prompted them to distribute their goods among their poorer brethren, in the manner related in Acts, chap. v. exposed them to the imputation of being deemed poor, and to the odium of being ranked with the Ebionites. The inconsistency and malice of their adversaries in this respect, Philo exposes, in the same strain of divine eloquence and holy indignation: "Is it not irrational and replete with impudence or madness, or something else, which, from its enormity, wants a name, to say (on the other hand) that those men are *poor*, who

6. Farther, it will presently appear, from the Gospel of Matthew, that the Hebrew converts, to whom this evangelist addressed his narrative, and who, in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Writings of the Fathers, are called Nazarenes, were no other than the Ebionites: Since there may be discovered in it, traces of that illiberal attachment to the Mosaic institutions, and of that jealousy for their Jewish privileges, under which the latter are represented as having laboured.

These arguments seem to me to prove,

abound with gold, silver, revenues, and a multitude of other possessions: whose abundance supplies not only their own friends and relatives, but extending beyond their own families, relieves large communities and tribes of men, and furnishes even a whole city with such things as are necessary in peace or war." From this extraordinary exertion of benevolence, which Philo himself says, exceeds the power of language to describe, we may perceive the force and justice of Paul's declaration, **THOUGH POOR, YET MAKING MANY RICH.**

It is particularly worthy of notice, that the *famine*, to which that noble Author alludes, as voluntarily undergone by the Jewish believers for the sake of supplying the public with plenty, is that, which is thus noticed by Luke, "And in those days, some teachers came down from Jerusalem to Antioch; one of whom, named Agabus, arose, and signified by the Spirit, **THAT THERE WAS GOING TO BE A GREAT FAMINE THROUGHOUT ALL THE WORLD**, which came to pass accordingly under Claudius Cæsar. Then every one of the disciples according to his ability, determined to send relief to their brethren of Judea." Acts xi. 27—30.



beyond all dispute, that the distinction, which Epiphanius has insinuated, and which his implicit followers ever since have admitted, without a shadow of evidence, to have subsisted between the Nazarenes and Ebionites, has no foundation in any thing but artifice and falsehood.

Let us next proceed to the application that is to be made of the preceding enquiry:

*First*, In as much as Matthew published his gospel in the Hebrew tongue, and expressly for the use of the Hebrew converts, it follows, that this was the very gospel, and no other, which was used and received by them as *authentic*. This inference is confirmed, if confirmation be necessary, by the words of Irenæus, who says, that the Gospel according to Matthew, was written for the Jews: for these earnestly desired a Christ from the seed of David; and Matthew, having a still greater desire for this, hastened, with all diligence, to fulfil it<sup>\*</sup>. As then

<sup>\*</sup> Evangelium secundum Matthæum ad Judæos scriptum. Hi enim majorem in modum cupiebant ex semine Davidis Christum ostendi. Matthæus vero, qui eadem nec remissiore quam ipsi cupiditate teneretur, omni ratione contendit plenam ipsis fidem facere quod Christus sit e semine Davidis: propterea a Christi genealogia initium duxit; page 47 1.

the Jewish christians earnestly desired a gospel from the hands of Matthew, and as this evangelist complied with their desire, it must have been this alone, which they adopted as the authentic standard of their faith and practice. Indeed Irenæus in another place says positively, that the Ebionites, or the body of the Hebrew believers, did use the Gospel of Matthew, and no other\*.

*Secondly,* It is hence certain, that the introductory chapters did not exist in the original gospel, which came from the hand of Matthew. For it is implied in the words of Irenæus, and unequivocally asserted by Epiphanius†, that the gospel, which the Ebionites had received, did not contain those chapters, but began at the third. The former of these writers, it is true, says, that our evangelist began with the genealogy; and the latter boldly affirms, that the Jews mu-

\* Qui autem dicuntur Ebionæi consentiunt quidem mundum a Deo factum.—Solo autem evangelio quod est secundum Matthæum utuntur: p. 102.

† Vide vol. i. p. 137. In the next page he says of them, that they cut off the genealogy from the gospel which they used, and that it thus began, "And it came to pass, in the days of Herod king of Judea, under Caiphas the chief priest, that John came baptising with the baptism of repentance in the river Jordan."

tilated the genuine gospel. But these are assertions without proof, and the assertions too of men capable of telling any falsehood in support of their own darling opinions. To every candid enquirer it must appear highly improbable, that those christians should have rejected any part of their gospel, if they were convinced of its authenticity. The reason of this improbability is obvious: the preaching of this evangelist, and that of the other apostles, was the means of converting them to the christian faith. He must, therefore, have been held by them in high and incontrovertible authority: and, as a proof of this, they solicited from him a gospel, which they valued more than any of the others. It was not, then, because they *mutilated*, but because they preserved unadulterated, the sacred records committed to their care, that they rejected the disputed chapters. The charge of mutilation they would, undoubtedly, have repelled with indignation, and retorted upon their accusers, the guilt of an unparalleled falsehood and forgery. This then being the case, we have the testimony of the Jewish christians, who, as they were in circumstances, which precluded all doubt or mistake, were the most competent judges on the subject,

*That the chapters in question formed no part of the original Gospel of Matthew.*

*Thirdly,* As the Hebrew christians, whether they be called Nazarenes or Ebionites, used the genuine Gospel of Matthew, it follows of course, that the spurious gospel, which the fathers call the *Nazarene Gospel*, and of which they have given us some extracts in their writings, was not regarded by them as the authentic history of that evangelist, though they might hold it in some estimation and occasionally consult it. This gospel was probably the production of some Jewish converts, and, as it may have contained facts not related in the Evangelical History, or exhibited such as are, in a new and peculiar light, it would very well serve, the purpose of explaining or illustrating the authentic Gospel of Matthew. The use of it, thus far, was rational and praiseworthy, though it might furnish their opponents among the Gentiles, with specious grounds for misrepresentation. For so great was the malice of the fathers against the Jewish believers, for opposing the divinity and supernatural birth of Jesus, that they availed themselves of every opportunity to misrepresent their sentiments, and to vi-



lity their character \*. It cannot therefore be a matter of wonder, that they have fixed upon certain parts in a book, which was intended merely to illustrate the Apostolic records, and handed them down to posterity as so many specimens of the gospel, which these Jewish believers preferred and deemed genuine.

\* The Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem, used to come, and offer prayers, where the temple stood, till they were prohibited by the orders of Adrian, to approach that place. See Mosheim *De Rebus Christianorum*, p. 332. Irenæus from this takes occasion to say, that they paid divine honours to that city, p. 103. The Jewish christians again rejected the divinity of Jesus, and maintained that the Spirit of God descended upon him after his baptism in the river Jordan. This seems to have given rise to the following barefaced calumny of Epiphanius. ἰδὼς αὐτὸ θεοῦ ἔχουσι. *They esteem water as a God.* p. 53. Clement in one of his *Stromata*, says something of the same kind concerning the disciples of *Thales*, who held water to be the principle of all things. ἰδὼς ὡς θεὸν σέβουσιν. Which if I recollect right, are his words. Take the following paragraph, in which Epiphanius speaks of *Ebion*, or Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth as a specimen of the manner in which the Ebionites are spoken of by the later fathers: Ut enim, si quis variis ex lapillis ornatum, sibi aliquem conficiat, aut variegatam coloribus vestem induat, atque exquisitam quandam elegantiam adhibeat, sic ille contra omnibus undique perniciosis ac pestiferis dogmatibus accercitis, quidquid unaquæque hæresis horrendum imprimis, et exitiabile, ac detestandum asserit, turpe, inquam, et absonum absurditatisque plenum, et odiosum, e singulis dogma concinnans, omnium in se formas speciesque transtulit. Nam Samaritanorum impuram superstitionem affectavit. A Judæis porro nomen accepit. Ab Oscœis et Nazaræis dogmata. Cerinthianorum deinde formam, Carpocratianorum nequitiam; Christianorum denique appellationem usurpare contendit, p. 125.

*Fourthly*, The artful insinuation of Jerome, and the audacious assertion of Epiphanius, that the account of the miraculous conception, existed in this *Nazarene*, or *spurious gospel*, though admitted to be true, can have no weight, nor afford any just ground for inferring, that the same account was extant in the genuine production of Matthew. On the contrary, the presumption is, that as the Hebrew christians appear from indisputable evidence, not to have had the story prefixed to the *authentic gospel*, which they used, they had it not, in a gospel less esteemed indeed, but valuable, for the purpose of illustration. This presumption is confirmed, by the manner in which Epiphanius attests the above fact: “The Nazarenes have the Gospel according to Matthew, most complete in the Hebrew language: for this is still preserved among them obviously, as it was written from the beginning in Hebrew characters. But I know not whether they have taken away the genealogies from Abraham to Christ\*.” Observe here, he does not say that the Na-

\* Εχουσι δε το κατα Ματθαιον Ευαγγελιον πληρυστατον Εβραϊσι· παρ αυτοις γαρ σαφως τουτο, καθως εξ αρχης εγραφη Εβραϊκοις γραμμασι, ετι σωζεται· ουκ οιδαδε, ει και τας γενεαλογιας τα απο του Αβρααμ αχρι Χριστου περιειλον. Vol. i. p. 124.

zarenes *used* this gospel, but only *had* it in their possession. The writer is also guilty of gross inconsistency: for he asserts, that they had this gospel *most complete*, and yet immediately adds, “*he did not know whether* they had taken away the genealogies.” Epiphanius moreover seems to me to labour under a secret conviction of falsehood, in asserting the integrity of this gospel, and endeavours to repel it, by a number of emphatic words. This gospel is *still* preserved—is preserved *among them*—is preserved *obviously*, as it was written *from the beginning*. Whether there be any weight in this observation or not, it may be still demonstrated, that the Nazarenes had no gospel among them, which contained the introductory chapters: for it appears, from the account, which this very author gives of them, that they were no believers in the contents of those chapters. His account of their sentiments is as follows: “They do not differ in any way from the Jews, excepting that they believe in Christ; for they admit, that the dead shall be raised, and that God is the author of all things. They maintain too that God is one, and that Jesus is his Son \*”. If then, they

\* Neque enim apud illos, legis libri, prophetæ aut Hagiographa prohibentur, quæ Judæi Biblia nuncupant, ut et a Ju-

agreed with the Jews, excepting that they believed in Christ, they must, like them, have rejected his divinity, pre-existence, and supernatural birth. Like the Jews, too, they maintained that God, and not *Jesus*, was the Maker of all things, that there was but *one*, and not *three* Gods. They however believed, differently from their countrymen, that Jesus was the *Son* or *servant* of God. Epiphanius must therefore be guilty of gross equivocation, when, in the sequel he adds, that "he was not sure, whether they were led by the depravity of Cerinthus to adopt the doctrine of our Lord's simple humanity." But if you were not sure, sir, of this, why did you stigmatize them as *heretics*, and inveigh against them with all the virulence of reproach, calling them *hornets, which inflict pain by their poisonous bites?*

If however any doubt still remain of the conviction of Epiphanius, that the Jewish christians were unitarians, in the strictest

da is approbantur, a quibus Nazaræi nulla in re dissentiunt, qui ad legis præscriptum ac Judæorum more omnia sua dogmata profitentur: nisi quod in Christum credunt. Nam et mortuos excitari putant, et a Deo universa producta, unum esse Deum, ejusque filium Jesum Christum prædicant; p. 122.



sense of the word, it must be removed by the account which he gives of the first Jewish converts, in Egypt. "Having seen," says he, "as it were from a distant beacon, the flame, which Jesus and his apostles kindled in Judea, though they knew not the use of it; they too kindled a fire in imitation of it, and burnt themselves. For having heard of the name of Jesus, and seen some of the signs exhibited by the hands of the apostles, they believed in Christ, and as they knew that he was conceived at Nazareth, and brought up in the house of Joseph, and for this reason stiled *Jesus of Nazareth*, they assumed to themselves the title of *Nazarenes* \*". In this passage are two things worthy of notice: 1. The Nazarene chris-

\* Erant illi genere quidem Judæi, atque ad legem et circumcisionem haserant; sed quemadmodum qui e specula procul ignem aspiciunt, neque cujus rei gratia, quemve ad usum hoc incendium excitatum fuerit, sciunt, utrumnam ad obscuram coquenda, cibosque victui præparandos, an ut cremia aridæ virgulta, ut assolet, concremarent; sic illi, illud ipsum imitati, semetipsos incendio consumpserunt; siquidem, solo Jesu nomine audito, conspectisque, quæ ab apostolis fierent portenta ac miraculis, in illum et ipsi quoque crediderunt. — Γινόντες δὲ αὐτὸν, Ναζαρετ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐγκυμονηθέντα, καὶ ἐν οἴκῳ Ἰωσήφ ἀνατρέφοντα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον καλεῖσθαι, ὡς καὶ οἱ Ἀποστολοὶ Φασὶ, Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον ἄνδρα ἀποδόξουν· ὡς οὐτα σημειῖται καὶ τετρασὶ καὶ ἐξῆς, τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα ἐπιτιθεασθὶ αὐτῷ.

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tians in Egypt (some of whom, perhaps, were at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, and there converted by the apostles to the new faith, which, of course, they conveyed with them into their own country), *knew* that Jesus was not only *educated* at Nazareth, but *born* in that place. They therefore rejected the story, which represents him as having received his birth at *Bethlehem*. 2. Because our Lord was born and educated at Nazareth, they assumed the name of *Nazarenes*. They therefore distinguished themselves by this appellation, in opposition to those that referred his nativity to the town of Bethlehem; that is, they intended, by the very name, which they adopted, as the followers of Jesus, to discourage the story of his supposed miraculous birth. Hence, their calumniator, Epiphanius, says of them, that they burned themselves in the very fire, which they kindled in imitation of Christ and his apostles.

But this is not all the evidence we have to prove that the introductory chapters were not contained in the genuine original gospel of Matthew. The sect of the Nazarene christians were famous for their skill in the

Hebrew language, and diligent in the investigation of their sacred records. *Symmachus*, a Syrian philosopher, became a convert to their principles, though he flourished at a period, when they had lost much of the lustre they had attained to, in the apostolic age. Eusebius speaks of him thus, in his Ecclesiastical History, lib. vi. c. 17. "*Symmachus* was an *Ebionite*. The heresy of those, who are thus called, maintained, that Christ was born of Joseph and Mary, and supposed that he was a mere man; and, as we have seen from the preceding history, adhered firmly to the Jewish law. The commentaries of *Symmachus* are still extant, in which he strenuously exerts himself to fortify the above-mentioned heresy, by an appeal to the Gospel of Matthew\*.

The inference from this passage is very obvious. As *Symmachus* fortified the heresy of the *Ebionites* by an energetic appeal to the Gospel of Matthew, the story of our

\* The words in the original are very strong:—Εν οἷς δὲ δοκεῖ πρὸς τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον ἀποτεταγμένος τὴν δηλωμένην αἵρεσιν κρατυεῖν. He stretches himself to bear up the above-declared heresy, by resting its weight on Matthew. The allusion is to a man supporting a heavy burden, by pressing against it, when placed in part on something else opposite to him.

Lord's supernatural birth, was not extant in that, which the Jewish converts used: and that the gospel under the name of Matthew, to which he thus appealed, was the original and genuine one, even Eusebius dares not deny.

In another place, (lib. iv. cap. 22. p. 184) Eusebius thus speaks of *Hegesippus*, an early Jewish christian, who wrote an history of the church, from the days of the apostles to his own time:—"He extracts some things out of the gospel according to the Hebrews; (I mean out of) that, which is composed in the Syriac, and especially that in the Hebrew dialect, shewing, by that means, that he was a believer from among the Hebrews\*." Here it is plainly implied,—that there existed a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew in the time of Hegesippus, which (if I understand the author rightly) was written both in the Syriac tongue and in the then modern Hebrew;—that in reference to the different sects of the Gnostics, (whom Eusebius had just before mentioned, as refuted by Hegesippus) he cited some things out of the Hebrew, and not out of the Greek version, and that in do-

\* See the observations of Lardner on these words; vol. ii. p. 144.



ing this, he manifested himself to be one of the *Ebionites*. From which these two conclusions follow:—Hegesippus acted the same part, which Symmachus did after him, viz. appealed to the original Gospel of Matthew, in support of the Ebionite heresy; and that the circumstance of a man's citing the Hebrew, and not the Greek gospel, was deemed a sufficient proof, in those days, that he rejected the divinity and supernatural birth of Jesus.

The spuriousness of the chapters in question may, in the last place, be proved, by the authority of *Tatian*. This heretic, as he is called, was for some time a disciple of Justin Martyr. But refusing, in imitation of his master, to adopt the pernicious maxim, that it was lawful to tell a falsehood in order to promote the truth, rejected the story of our Lord's supernatural birth, and excluded it from a harmony of the four gospels, which he compiled. His honesty, in this respect, of course, brought down upon him the vengeance of the orthodox divines, who, in succeeding ages, supported the tale. Accordingly, Irenæus and Epiphanius represent him as an apostate from the truth, and one, that had sunk into all the blasphemous errors

of the Gnostics. It is painful to see a virtuous character thus traduced, and that for the very reasons, which entitle him to our esteem and veneration. Fortunately one of the productions of this writer has survived the wreck of time, and the malice of ancient fraud. His *Oration* to the Greeks, which could come from none but a man, that was truly honest, and highly elegant and informed, shows to us what his real principles were; and proves, that in all the essential articles of the christian faith, they were diametrically opposite to the Gnostic system. For, in this work, he professes to believe, and he inculcates too upon his readers, in unequivocal terms, that the human soul is *material* and *mortal in itself*, but shall be restored again to life with the resurrection of the body (Vide p. 52. *Edition Worth.*); that Christ really suffered (p. 54.); that there shall be a judgment to come, in which God himself will preside (p. 24.) He also ascribes the creation of the world to the Almighty, from whom, and not from an inferior deity, proceeded the Logos (p. 20.) Finally he refutes the doctrine of fatality, denies the supposed influence of the stars, the artifices of magic, and the efficacy of charms and amulets (p. 36, 37, 64, 65.) In short, so far

from falling into the absurdities of Valentinus, he stands forth, a teacher of the truth, as it is in Jesus. At least, it may be said of him, that, if he has not reasoned with all the accuracy and justness of a thoroughly-enlightened christian, he has not in any instance deviated into the wilds of heathenism, or attempted to recommend his faith, under the borrowed colours of falsehood\*. Theo-

\* I cannot help selecting one passage, as a specimen of Tatian's style and manner. After observing that he would not receive the decrees of fate; since the worst of men taught this doctrine, merely as a pretext to justify their own enormities, he then adds, "I have no wish to become a king; I am not inclined to enrich myself; I have refused preferments; I hate debaucheries; and that luxury, which results from commerce, I do not covet; I strive not to attain your Olympic crowns; I am free from the madness of ambition; I despise death, and am superior to all the attacks of disease; nor does sorrow waste my soul. If I be a slave, I remain in slavery; and if I be born free, I pride not in the freedom of my birth. I behold the same sun with others; and others, like me, are subject to that death, which is the consequence of yielding to sin. The affluent man sows the ground, and the needy man partakes of his produce. The rich die, and the poor reach the circumscribed end of life. They who possess much riches, want for more, and through the affected respect, which is shown them, they become vain-glorious; while he, who is not in affluence, has most contentment. Desiring nothing but what depends upon himself, he lives in placid tranquillity;" p. 43. No reader of taste, I am sure, can peruse this paragraph without being gratified with that simple eloquence and unlaboured ease, which mark the language of it: And as to the sentiments it contains, he must be convinced, that the man, who dictated them, possessed a mind highly exalted by the views, and rigidly disciplined by the influence of the christian doctrine.

doret thus speaks of his *Harmony* of the Gospels:—"He composed a gospel, which is called *Dia Tessaron* (of the Four), leaving out the genealogies, and every thing, which shows the Lord to be of the seed of David, according to the flesh; which has been used not only by those of his sect, but also by them, who follow the apostolic doctrine, they not perceiving the fraud of the composition, but simply using it as a compendious book. I have also met with two hundred of these books, which were in esteem in our churches; all which I took away, and laid aside in a parcel, and placed in their room the gospels of the four evangelists;" Apud Lar. vol. ii. p. 138.

In this passage it is said, that Tatian left out the *genealogies*. By this I conceive, we are to understand, that he took away the introductory chapters in Matthew and Luke, in which the genealogies are contained. Thus Epiphanius says of the Nazarenes, that he did not know whether they cut off the genealogies from the Gospel of Matthew, meaning the whole story of our Lord's birth\*. What is

\* Thus too Irenæus, when he informs us that Matthew began with the genealogy, it is his object to inculcate that the introductory chapters were extant in his gospel. It appears, in-



here added, that he excluded the other texts, which show the Lord to have been born of the seed of David, is probably a falsehood, and indeed may be shown to be such. The position that he was not the offspring of David, was only maintained by the Gnostics, as a consequence of their opinion that Jesus was a man only in appearance, or that he descended from some Egyptian family. But Tatian was not an Egyptian, nor a Gnostic, and therefore could not be led by his principles, or by national pride, to the above conclusion. Farther, Epiphanius tells us, that his Harmony was classed with the gospel according to the Hebrews, and was thought by some to be the same with that gospel\*; and this seems to be the meaning of Theodo-

deed, that in the Harmony, still extant, and which is ascribed to Tatian, these chapters wholly, or in part, are found. But, I hesitate not to say, that nothing which favours the doctrine of our Lord's supernatural birth, ever came from that upright man. He did not believe it, and he had too much integrity to impose upon mankind such a gross falsehood as a branch of the gospel of Christ. Had Tatian embraced the story, he, like his master Justin and others, would have mentioned and enforced it in his address to the Greeks. But not a syllable is there said about it, which is a plain proof that it formed no part of his creed.

\* The words of Epiphanius are as follows:—*Λεγεται δε το, δια τεσσαρων ευαγγελιον ὑπ' αὐτου γεγενησθαι, ὅπερ καὶ Ἑβραίων τινες καλοῦσι.* Vol. i. p. 391.

ret, when he says, that it was used not only by those of his sect, but also by them, who follow the apostolic doctrine. But how could it have been classed with the Hebrew gospel, or used by those, that followed the doctrine of the apostles, if the author left out the places, which show Jesus to be a descendant of David! The assertion of Theodoret then, is a falsehood, proceeding from the same dishonourable motive, which prompted him to vilify all the faithful believers, who disdained to adulterate the celestial wine of truth with the impure streams of human error.

From the implied testimony then of Tatian, Hegesippus, and Symmachus, and from the concurrent belief of all the Jewish christians, the conclusion irresistibly follows, that the original gospel, composed by our holy evangelist, did not contain the controverted chapters. This fact will serve to clear up some difficulties, respecting the real existence of that gospel in former times. *First*, It explains the reason, why the fathers have not bestowed the same care in the preservation of it, as of the present Greek text, or of the other gospels. Had it been transmitted to posterity, it would, they well knew, be

an everlasting monument of the subsequent insertion of the introductory part. The fraud and the fear of detection, of which Theodoret gives us an example in the above passage, confined the circulation of it to the Jewish believers. They were the sole repository of it, and with them it perished. *Secondly*, From the same motive, which induced the christian writers to suppress that gospel, they also neglected to make enquiries about it \*, or to give us some information respecting the person, who translated it

\* Lardner argues against the real existence of Matthew's Hebrew gospel, from Origen not enquiring after and consulting it. "In his Commentaries on the second Psalm, he makes mention of two Hebrew copies, which he had seen, and observes a difference between them, in disposing the first two Psalms, and then how they were disposed in the Septuagint version. Again, upon Ps. iii. 7, he consults the Hebrew copies, and finds a difference from the Seventy. Well, why did not Origen enquire also for Hebrew copies of St. Matthew's Gospel?"

"I cannot but think, therefore, Origen was not fully satisfied that St. Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew. Undoubtedly there was such a tradition, as he himself owns. This was said by some; but perhaps the account was not so attested as to demand a ready assent. If Origen had believed St. Matthew's gospel to have been written in Hebrew, in all probability he would have been induced to enquire for it; and if his belief had been well grounded, it can hardly be doubted, but he might have found it upon enquiry. Origen had an intimate friendship with the chief bishops of Palestine: he could not but be well known to all the christians in general in that country, none of whom would have refused to lend him their copies of any book of the New Testament in their possession. At one word spoken by

into Greek, and the time in which this was done. *Thirdly*, As the circumstance that Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew, without the miraculous conception, bore decidedly against the advocates of that story, in ancient times, their testimony to the publication of that gospel in the Hebrew language, is deserving of the highest credit: Since we may rest assured, that they would never have concurred in such a tradition, if it were not founded in truth. Had its publication in that tongue been a matter of uncertainty, or had it been capable, from its obscurity, of being concealed, they would have passed it over in profound silence, and represented the interpolated Greek version as the only genuine production of that evangelist\*.

him, Ambrose, and the notaries employed by him, and many others, would have sought for Hebrew copies of St. Matthew's gospel; and if there had been any such in that country, or near it, there would have been brought to him as many as he desired. Nevertheless Origen does not appear to have ever seen such a copy; therefore, there was no such thing in being as an authentic Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew; if there had, how could it have escaped the industry and inquisitiveness of Origen;" vol. ii. p. 541, 542.

See also vol. vi. p. 62. where he argues, that Matthew did not write his gospel in Hebrew, because we are not informed who it was that rendered it into Greek.

\* No part of ancient ecclesiastical history is so obscure, confused, and contradictory, as what relates to the Jewish con-



*Finally*, It follows, from the forgery of the disputed chapters, that Jesus became the Son of God just after his baptism by John, and that the power and wisdom, which then descended upon him in the form of a dove, together with the attestation then given him by Jehovah himself, as his Son, constitute his claims to that character. And this is what the Jewish christians, with the apostles at their head, maintained. The truth of the above conclusion, too, is confirmed by the remarkable piece of history, which immediately succeeds the narrative of his baptism.

As Jesus possessed the nature of man, and like all other men was governed by the great

verts, their sentiments, and the gospel, which they used. The investigation, which is made above will, I trust, serve to clear up these subjects. It hence appears, that all the confusion and obscurity, which hang over them, have proceeded entirely from the endeavours of the fathers to perpetuate and impose upon posterity for divine truths, those abominable doctrines, which were borrowed from the Gnostics, at a time when, as we shall see in the sequel, their sentiments underwent some reformation, in consequence of the vigorous opposition made to them by the apostles. I cannot conclude without recommending it to my readers, to peruse the writings of Jones, Lardner, and others, respecting the *Nazarene Gospel*. He will there see into what false conclusions, absurd conjectures, and endless uncertainties, they have been betrayed by an unsuspecting, but mistaken confidence, in the authority of the early christian writers.

law of self-love, he felt, on receiving his commission from heaven, a powerful and instantaneous inclination to use it, for his own personal benefit. Hence arose in his breast, a violent struggle between selfish desire, on the one hand, and the necessity of submitting, on the other, to the will of heaven, in the execution of his office. The powers, of which he saw himself possessed, gave such a strong and sudden impulse to the natural wish of gratifying his own appetites, and of investing himself agreeably to the prepossessions of his countrymen, with all spiritual and temporal dominion, as to hold him for some short time in suspense about the course he should pursue. But being aware, that a compliance with this impulse would frustrate the end of his mission, and forfeit his character as the Son of God, he nobly resisted the suggestions of self-love, as so many temptations offered by *Satan himself*. "Then was Jesus," writes the evangelist, "led up of the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that

these stones be made bread. But he answered, and said, It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on the pinnacle of the temple. And said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest, at any time, thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. And saith unto him, all those things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;" Mat. iv. 1—11.

This piece of history, when divested of that symbolical representation, which characterises the style of the eastern nations,

and expressed in plain and simple terms, is, as appears to me, to this effect:—*Jesus feeling very hungry, proposed to himself the question, Whether, if he really were the Son of God, he might not use his extraordinary powers as such, to supply his wants, and thus prevent himself from languishing to death\**. But this question, which was excited in his mind by the want of food, he negatived, as it might lead to an exercise of his powers, which, though innocent, on the present occasion would be inconsistent with the will of God, and favourable to the cause of the adversary.

Having resisted this temptation, he was attacked by another: He knew the manner in which his countrymen expected their Messiah to make his first appearance. The natural wish he che-

\* The end, which the tempter had in view in his attempt to persuade Jesus to turn stones into bread, or, as Mr. Wakefield renders the clause, *into loaves*, is not expressed. But his object is very evident from the reply made to him, *Man shall not live on bread alone*. Which means, that though he should in a miraculous manner procure food, it would not necessarily follow, that his life should be preserved. The drift of the tempter, then, was to insinuate, that Jesus would perish through hunger, unless he used his power immediately to supply his want. This ellipsis, be it observed, is a strong presumption, that the whole of the temptation consisted of ideas, excited in the mind of Jesus by his feelings and other circumstances.



*rished of being received as such by them, suggested to him the propriety of placing himself on the eastern wing of the temple, and dropping thence in the midst of the immense crowd below. If he did this, his fancy suggested to him, that, on seeing him fall, unhurt, from such a stupendous height, they would receive him as the Messiah, and in consequence invest him, without hesitation, with the chief dignities and emoluments of the Jewish church. But this suggestion, too, he withstood : for, however desirable he deemed it to be, to insure the favour of the Jews by appearing among them, in the manner, in which they expected their Messiah to appear, he judged it presumptuous to depend on God for an extraordinary support, if he endangered his life to answer an end, which his wisdom thought fit to accomplish by other and better means.*

*The love of glory and distinction, which are inseparable from the human heart, however exalted by benevolence, presented to the imagination of Jesus a still greater allurements. Not only the government of Judea, but all the kingdoms of the world, ambition held up to his view, as within his reach, if he would but employ for this purpose, the authority now invested in him; and it farther insinuated, that his aggrandise-*

ment in this respect, would remove at once, every impediment to universal reception; since the whole Jewish nation expected a prince, and a conqueror, in the person of their Messiah. But this temptation he instantly repelled, as being incompatible with that conduct, which the wisdom of heaven thought fit he should pursue, as the Saviour of mankind\*.

From this explanation of the passage,

\* The hypothesis of *Farmer*, that the temptation was a visionary scene is, I conceive, itself a vision, though no reader of taste can peruse his treatise, without being charmed and edified with the many elegant and just remarks, which are interspersed throughout the whole of it. The general idea, however, which that able critic entertained on this subject is, I contend, far from the truth. In proof of my assertion, were it not foreign to the present enquiry, I might adduce many, and, as it appears to me, decisive reasons. But the best and most effectual way to overthrow an erroneous supposition is the substitution of one more just and true: And it is maintained, that the circumstances of the ideas, which constitute the temptation, being, on this occasion, excited in the breast of our Lord, well accords with the conclusion we are taught to draw from the known laws of the human mind, operating in the peculiar situation, in which the history represents him. These laws further justify us in asserting, that those ideas would be most predominant, *when first suggested*, and that their force would be weakened, and their recurrence rendered less frequent, after the first temptation, which they presented, had been successfully defeated; though they might at intervals, recur in subsequent scenes. And this was the fact: Luke, in addition to the narrative of Matthew, asserts, "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, *he departed from him for a season*;" chap. iv. 13.

we may draw the three following conclusions :—

*First*, Jesus assumed the title, *Son of God*, because he was thus pointed out by the divine Spirit, which descended upon him, after his baptism, and not because he was a supernatural being, or, because he had come into this world in a supernatural manner.

*Secondly*, The doubt, which our Lord seems to have entertained, that he was the Messiah, implied in the words, *if thou be the Son of God*, and which naturally proceeded from the vast magnitude and novelty of his commission, is incompatible with the received doctrines of his divinity and supernatural birth.

*Thirdly*, The same conclusion follows, from the violent temptations, to which he was exposed, immediately after he had received divine power and wisdom. Such temptations correspond precisely with the feelings and language, which a being merely human would have manifested, if placed in the circumstances of our Saviour at that time. Had he been a divine or angelic being, conceived without the instrumentality of a man, of

which, if true, he must have been fully aware, all temptation from the love of pleasure, riches, and ambition \*, would have been absolutely precluded by a firm and unshaken conviction, that he was the Christ, and by an *early* and *invariable* determination, as to the course he should pursue in the discharge of his office.

\* It is worthy of notice, that the temptation of Jesus consists of *three parts*, which taken together, comprise all those *selfish* considerations, which tempt men to sacrifice to their own private gratifications, those duties, which they owe to God and their neighbours. The first comprehends the pleasure of eating and drinking, or in general those of *sense*. The second includes *church authority*, or that authority, which ecclesiastical men possess and exercise, under a false system of religion, over the *minds* of their fellow-creatures; while the third contains *temporal power*, or that power, which usurpers have claimed in all ages, over the *bodies* of men. These, with the riches and honours procured by them, it is certain, constitute the temptations, which assail every human being; and they are the temptations, it seems, which, though without success, attacked our Lord. Hence we perceive, the propriety of the apostolic declaration, "For we have not an high-priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, *but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*;" Heb. iv. 15.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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